

# ツンデレ悪役令嬢 リーゼロッテと

実況の遠藤くんと  
解説の小林さん

TSUNDERE akuyaku reijou Liselotte to  
Jikkyou no Endo kun to  
Kaisetsu no Kobayashi san



恵ノ島すず

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『That's some strong tsun! Liselotte is really pouring on the tsun now! Don't you think she's taking it too far?!』

『To describe Liselotte's move in a nutshell, it would be 'Let me join in too!' But even if that's her intention, her overly haughty attitude and tendency to excessively beat around the bush have caused her to become misunderstood, don't you think? It seems that His Highness's opinion of Liselotte has worsened once again. Oh, what a precarious development...!』

In the tense atmosphere of the courtyard, the strange voices of a man and a woman rang through the air. The man's voice was strong and passionate, whilst the woman's was calm and measured.

The voices that sounded like opposites formed a magnificent duo, and their sonorous call seemed to descend from the heavens. Later, when the history books were written, they would become known as 'Play-By-Play Endo-kun and The Colour Commentator Kobayashi-san,' revered as two of the upholding pillars of the divine pantheon of gods.

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"Just what is it that you think you are doing here?"

The moment a beautiful girl with curled blonde hair and striking violet eyes called Liselotte—who was both the daughter of Marquis Riefenstahl and my fiancée—entered the courtyard, I knew that whatever happened next would give me a headache.

"A-Ah, that's... It's just... There's something I didn't understand in the last class, so..."

The girl who spoke back to her as she tried to close up the textbook that had been open on her knee until then in embarrassment had rosy blonde hair and eyes the colour of the sky. Her name was Finne, a friend I had made recently.

As she sat beside me on the bench, she seemed flustered over whether she should stand up respectfully or remain seated, so I decided to calm things down with a hand.

"When I saw that she was troubled, I decided to help her study. Why are you here, Liselotte?"

After I affirmed Finne's words, Liselotte gave me a silent curtsy before opening her mouth again.

"My fiancée is spending time alone with another woman, it seems. Or at the very least, that's what some kind passersby told me as I was walking through the courtyard. I merely wished to witness it myself."

'Oh, this really is going to be a headache,' I thought to myself miserably when her venomous tone and angry face didn't match her polite speech at all.

"There isn't anything that you need to be concerned about. We are simply discussing magic theory in a public courtyard."

"I am sure that Your Highness Prince Siegward has no ill intentions, but can anyone know what her true motives are?"



As Liselotte glared at Finne with blazing suspicion, the poor girl shook pitifully.

If Liselotte was going off of the rumour she had heard before, then things certainly might lead to a misunderstanding. But, neither Finne nor I had done anything to feel guilty about. Thinking about it rationally, there shouldn't really be any confusion at all.

Perhaps the woman who spoke so viciously, my fiancée Liselotte, was maliciously exaggerating what was going on for her own gain. What was I going to do about that?

“Well, it certainly would be difficult for a commoner who has never received a proper education to comprehend the teachings of the Royal Academy of Magic. If you like, perhaps I could instruct you? Ahh... Does Miss Finne only wish to be instructed by a handsome gentleman instead?”

Liselotte had to take things one step further before I could open my mouth to attempt to talk to her and calm her down.

『That's some strong tsun! Liselotte is really pouring on the tsun now! Don't you think she's taking it too far!?!』

『To describe Liselotte's move in a sentence, it would be 'Let me join in too!'. But even if that's her intention, her excessive avoiding the point and typically pompous attitude means she has been misunderstood, don't you think? It seems that Liselotte's favour with His Highness has fallen once again. Oh, what a precarious development...!』

From the heavens, the 【Voices of the Gods】 resounded.

『Why did Liselotte make that move!? Even if she was just saying that sarcastically, His Highness won't take it well! Why can't she just understand thaaaaaat?!』

The man's voice was somber and filled with regret.

I looked around inadvertently, but I couldn't see anyone.

Neither Finne who was sitting next to me nor Liselotte, who had been directly mentioned, seemed to notice anything at all. Meanwhile, Liselotte continued to glare angrily at me as Finne, who was shrinking smaller and smaller in her seat by the second, glanced towards me anxiously.

『That is because Liselotte is what we call a tsundere. She's genuinely worried about Finne-chan's reputation in a situation like this, but because she loves His Highness so much, her words got twisted jealousy, and she can't express herself honestly.』

I could barely comprehend what the calm womanly voice was saying in my shock.

L-Love...? Who...? Jealousy...? What does Soon d'Rey mean...?

“Your Highness, is there something wrong...?”



Noticing the sudden strange look on my face, Liselotte’s angry expression turned to one of worry as she stared at me.

“Ah, no, it’s that just now I heard 【The Voice of God】 …”



That's right, these were probably the heavenly messengers that only the royal family could hear, 【The Voice of God】. Despite realizing that, the current situation was so far outside of the norm that I could only answer weakly, my voice trailing away.

The reason why my family came into power in this country was the ability to hear them.

We are a family that can hear the voices of the Gods who reside in a higher plane.

The heavenly voices of the Gods descend from the heavens and teach us various things, such as unheard of knowledge and secrets of the future.

However, being able to communicate with these eccentric Gods was usually completely based on their whims.

No matter how much you prayed for wisdom or knowledge of the future, usually all you would hear from them were one or two words; perhaps a hint or a warning about a future disaster such as an earthquake, never a fluid and fluent message like this.

Moreover, there has never been a case where two voices were heard at the same time mentioned in what I remembered of the records of the royal family.

“Have you heard of 【The Voice of God】 before?” I asked Finne. As I explained the ability passed down in my family to her, I glanced sideways at Liselotte, my thoughts cloudy.

Assuming the voices I heard just now really were Gods and I believed them, then this girl was in love with me.

Certainly, if I thought about it, Liselotte has always been stubborn around me...

『Why did His Highness Prince Siegward start thinking about Liselotte all of a sudden!?!』

『I don't know the reason either. Perhaps His Highness heard 【The Voice of God】 ...? But, His Highness shouldn't have awakened yet. This doesn't follow the scenario at all... Is this a secret route? Endo-kun, did you input any strange commands?』

For some reason, the voice of the Goddess seemed closer nearby than before.

But what they said was true. I was still young and hadn't come of age yet, so it was my first time hearing the Gods' voices.

However, I was somehow certain that the voices I was hearing descending from the heavens then must have been the 【The Voice of God】 I had learned about from my family's history records.

『I didn't do a thing! I just put it on autoplay like you told me to, Kobayashi-san. After choosing 'Study in the courtyard', you don't even need to touch the controller...』

In a passionate voice and sounding closer than before, the male-sounding God 【Endowkuhn】 spoke.

“Ah... Umm... Oh Great Gods Endowkuhn and Coebyashayshan, what is it that you are saying...?”

I stood up from the bench and spoke to the two Gods, who talked in a completely confusing manner.

The voices from the heavens suddenly fell quiet.

Had the 【Voices of the Gods】 fallen silent because they were listening to me? Since Liselotte and Finne had become anxiously quiet as well, the courtyard was blanketed by silence.

“I am deeply sorry for calling upon you so suddenly and out of turn. My name is Crown Prince Siegward. I am the first son of the King of Fitzenhagen. I am incredibly humbled by the fact you have been calling me by my title, but please do call me Siegward or simply Sieg.”

Then, with my greetings complete, I bowed deeply before the Gods.

Following my lead, Liselotte curtsayed elegantly. Meanwhile, Finne nearly lost her balance as she panicked and stiffly bowed three or four times.

The Gods exist on a far higher stratum than even a member of the royal family such as myself, disregarding a Marquis’ daughter like Liselotte or a commoner girl like Finne. It wouldn’t do for them to call me ‘His Highness’.

“O’ Great Endowkuhn... Ah, I started hearing both of your exultant voices the moment you said 『That’s some strong soon!』 . My family has been blessed with the gift of hearing the voices of the Gods who exist in another world.”

I was unable to see them, but the voices of the two Gods seemed confused somehow.

『Ahh... No, I suppose there was a setting like this... Eh, wait a minute, you can really hear my voice?! Well then... Your Highness- No, Sieg, if you really can hear me, make sure to give Rize-tan— I mean, Liselotte a big smoooooch!』

Smoo...!?

Coebyashayshan’s words left me completely gobsmacked once again.

Had she just told me to kiss Liselotte...!?

It was a terrible thing to consider, but all the same, they were still instructions given by God. As royalty... No, as an inhabitant of this world, I had no choice but to obey.

In any case, Liselotte is my fiancée.

I should be forgiven for at least one kiss... Still, doing it in public would be disgraceful.

Ahh, but, those were the instructions of God...

As my thoughts spun around in my head, I stepped towards Liselotte, cupping her cheek with my right hand.

“Y-Your Highness...?”

She stiffened up as she looked at me, her eyes wide with confusion.

God had commanded me.

But even so, this was a public courtyard...



There were so many eyes on us...

But, actually...

Liselotte's cheek was unexpectedly soft.

The skin under my fingers was a beautiful pale hue.

Her glossy lips were a cherry-shade of pink...

“W-What are you...Hn!?”

Ignoring Liselotte, who didn't know what was happening, I pulled her close to me and...

... Planted a deep kiss.

Pulling her close to me.

### Just How Red Can She Be...?

Ignoring Liselotte, who didn't know what was happening, I pulled her close to me and...

... Planted a deep kiss.

That said, it was just on the cheek.

"...Well, is that satisfactory, Coebyashayshan?"

Of course, I refrained from impulsively stealing a kiss from her lips.

Since I wasn't told specifically how to kiss her, I supposed that should be alright.

『There...!』

After a moment of evanescent silence, during which I pondered just how soft Liselotte's cheek had been, the voice of Cobeyasheshan pierced through the quiet.

Under my palm, Liselotte's cheek was growing hotter by the second. Looking back at her, they had grown a bright shade of red. Tears were welling in the corners of her eyes. Her entire body seemed like it was trembling.



*Just who is this cute creature?*

『THEREITISTHEREITIS! THERE! IT! IHHHHHHHHHHHIS!!』

Suddenly, Cobeyasheshan's voice turned into a shockingly loud shout.

『C-Calm down, Kobayashi-san!』

『How!? Could!? I!?!? Because! Sieg and Rize-tan just...!! Smooch! Even if it's just on the cheek! Smooch! The smooch!! Rize-tan's so kyuuuuuute!! Oh gosh, having seen this, I'd be fine dying right now...!』

『Please don't! I'm not sure why at all, but it seems like he really can hear our voices, right? In that case, why don't we do our best to help Sieg avoid the final boss and the witch and stuff? Let's do our best doing that, okay!? So stop smacking me on the back, okay!?』

『...That's it!』

As Cobeyasheshan shouted, the two venerable Gods began to hold a conversation I could barely comprehend.

Not wanting to rudely interrupt the two deities, I waited quietly. When they talked about Liselotte being 'cute,' however, I couldn't help but agree.

Usually, Liselotte was as stubborn as a mule, and headstrong to boot.

'I am the fiancée of the Crown Prince, Siegwald.' Regardless of how many people would approach her and comment on her beauty at social occasions, she would tell them that line and coldly brush them aside with a glare, so it was hard for me to even consider believing that the same girl would turn completely red and speechless from having simply been kissed on the cheek.

Just what happened to her usually brusque attitude? I was prepared for a scowl that reached below zero temperatures for what I just did.

Instead, her whole face was... No, even her neck and ears were completely red. Just how red can one person be?

『Ahem.』

As I was standing, fascinated by Liselotte's face, the Goddess coughed loudly.

Oh, had they finished talking?

I took my hand off Liselotte's cheek and attempted to straighten myself.

『Umm, well, for the time being, even if we don't really understand what's going on with being called Gods and such, we'll just go with it.』

Thus declared Cobeyashayshan.

Looking towards the heavens where she must dwell, I nodded in response.

Such is the will of the Gods.



『I know the scenarios that... Um, that is to say, what shall befall the country, centered on this academy.』

As expected of a Goddess.

『Ummm, but it would be sort of spoiling things if I suddenly said everything, and even if I told you everything right now, it really wouldn't make any sense to you... Moreover, I still want to keep our club practice going, so with that being said, from now on, we will continue providing play-by-play and colour commentary!!』

All I could do was stand in silent confusion as Coebayashayshan ordered an entirely incomprehensible commandment.

Play-by-play and... Colour commentary...?

『Umm, I'm, uh, I mean, my name is Endo, I handle the play-by-play.』

『My name is Kobayashi, the colour commentator.』

The Gods officially named themselves **【Endow of the Play-by-Play】** and **【Coebayashay of the Colour Commentary】**.

Perhaps they only use Kuhn and Shan when talking to each other? I must have been exceptionally rude.

In any case, I inscribed their names upon my heart.

*Ah, I should write it down too. I need a pen and paper... Does anyone have...? Ah, I can use Finne's. She had some, right? I'll borrow her notebook... Wait, when did she sit back down on the bench?*

『We'll be commentating on the events that are coming up, and most of all about Rize-tan's... Err, I mean, Liselotte's feelings. I'll be giving a detailed commentary on them. Ah jeez, it feels like I'm going crazy by talking to myself like this, but anyways... Sieg, just listen and think carefully, and this should all work out. It feels weird talking to someone in a different world too. What's more, Sieg, you've been kind of out of character for a while now, so it's fine if you don't talk to us. Instead, you can just listen to what we say instead. Does that work?』

*Out of character...?*

As I looked back at Liselotte and Finne with the Goddess' words in mind, I could see that both of them were staring at me with worry evident on their faces.

Ahh, right, even though I was technically talking to Gods, Liselotte and Finne could only hear my voice. I must have seemed insane. To all of the onlookers, it must have looked like I'd made a brilliant transformation into a madman.

It wasn't just those two either; nobody outside of the royal family can hear **【The Voice of God】**. Talking to Gods in public might cause some troublesome misunderstandings.

『Just listen』 ... I had my reservations about how discourteous it was to ignore the Gods, but their proposal was a great relief to me all the same.

“...Thank you very much for your benevolence.”

With a final word to the heavens, I bowed deeply once more and turned back to Liselotte and Finne.

That's right, I was supposed to be in the middle of a conversation with the two in the first place.

『Do your best, Sieg! Don't give in, Sieg! As Sieg returns to this tense situation, will he be able to safely overcome this difficult event...!?!』

『Since Liselotte has already become well-boiled after what just occurred, is it possible? It would be nice if all three of them were able to study peacefully together.』

That would be nice.

I agreed with Coebayashay's statement, but I refrained from vocalizing it.

With her face still flushed as red as it was when I kissed her cheek, Liselotte was absent-mindedly playing with her loosely curled hair. The fire with which she had strode into the courtyard was completely gone.

I didn't really understand what Endow meant by 【Event】, but it's clear that this situation would have played out completely differently if it wasn't for the intervention of the Gods.

"I've already finished receiving the commandments of the Gods. Now, why don't the three of us study together? Liselotte, you should join us too."

Trying to bring the two confused girls to their senses, I beckoned towards the bench, taking the dazed Liselotte's hand to gently sit her down.

We sat down with Liselotte in the middle, Finne on her left, and me on her right.

It seemed like Liselotte didn't have the energy to go after Finne like she had before. However, even if she sat awkwardly at first, it didn't take long for Liselotte to regain her elegant posture while Finne smiled bashfully in her direction.

Then I guess this seating arrangement is fine?

If I had sat next to Finne myself, it might cause Liselotte's pride to flare up again. What's more, it could cause some malicious onlooker to spread rumours.

"Now then, Finne, which parts didn't you understand?"

Finne had looked a little relieved that the discussion about the Gods was over, but now she flicked through the textbook hurriedly, her expression slightly confused.

It seemed like the place that she was tripping over was, in fact, the very fundamentals of magic.

Most of the students in the academy would have already studied them before attending school.

But, as a commoner without a family name to call her own, they were hardly something she could be expected to know.

"Oh, oh my, you do not even know this much?"

Turning towards Finne, Liselotte said that as if she were looking down on her. Although having said that, she was leaning in closer to her, as if she intended to start teaching.

“It can’t be helped if she never really had the opportunity to learn.”

But in order to help teach Finne myself from where I sat, I had no choice but to lean over Liselotte to point out things in the book.

“When it comes to this part...”

As I began to talk to Finne about the contents of the book, I was conscious that as I leaned past Liselotte, I was but a hair’s breadth away from touching her back.

*Gulp.*

She must have been aware of it too, as her back stiffened up whilst her neck, ears, and no doubt the face that I couldn’t see were shining in a brilliant shade of red that I could only describe as ‘cute’.

I realized that there were a number of things I could get away with and play off as accidental.

Should I let a little bit of my breath tickle those flushed ears?

Or should I brush down her shoulder through her back with my fingers?

Actually, even if I hugged her suddenly from behind, that would be fine, right...?

Seeing for my own two eyes the wisdom freely imparted by the Gods that ‘Liselotte is a Soon d’Rey and actually likes you’ was a divine truth that filled me with a deep and indescribable joy.

As I kept teaching in a happy mood, Liselotte looked flustered and confused by my sudden change in attitude. Meanwhile, Finne could barely suppress her smile as she looked at us. It seemed like the Goddess Coebayashay forgot to provide commentary, as the God Endow cried out 『Ouch ouch ouch, s-stop it, Kobayashi-san...! 』

...Just what could have been transpiring up in their heavenly kingdom?



## 【MagiKoi】

“Wow, that was a shock...”

As we both muttered the same thing in amazement, we looked at each other and laughed.

“In any case, I’m looking forward to working with you from now on, *Play-By-Play Endo-kun*.”

Saying so with a laugh and a smirk on her face, Kobayashi-san reached out her hand to me.

My name is Endo Aoto, a sophomore in high school. I’m currently a member of the Broadcasting Club.

The girl smiling in front of me was Kobayashi Shihono, a fellow member of the club.

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Everything began the day that Kobayashi-san brought an otome game to our clubroom.

Our broadcasting club is pretty lax.

Apart from when a major tournament was coming up, obligating us to spend a few days in advance practising our commentating, we usually only gathered completely as a group once a week in the clubroom on a Wednesday.

But because of the nature of the club, even outside of the days when everyone gathered for practice, someone always had to be on duty before school, during lunch, and after school.

So, other than after classes on a Wednesday, only those on duty will be in the clubroom, with a lot of time on their hands.

In order to kill time, over the years members have left all sorts of stuff in the clubroom, like manga, a television and even a gaming console.

As for my dear Kobayashi-san, she had left a certain otome game there to play.

**【Majikaru ni Koi Shite】** A Magical Romance, or MagiKoi for short, is set in a world much like the Renaissance period of European history. You play as a common girl named Finne who, at the age of fifteen, discovered that she could use magic that was supposed to only be usable by those of noble blood, for whatever reason.

Finne enrolled in the prestigious Royal Academy, where only the sons and daughters of aristocratic families were permitted to attend. It is there that she encounters 5 capture targets (not including the hidden route), such as a knight and one of the teachers, and takes part in all sorts of romance and adventure.

Technically the Academy tutors students from 15 years old until they’re 18, but the entire story takes place during Finne’s junior year.

“Ahh jeez, that tsundere Villainess Liselotte is just too cute! Those hot boys are good as well!”

Ever since the day she fully cleared all the routes of MagiKoi, Kobayashi-san never stopped talking passionately about it, always imploring me to play it whenever we were on duty in the broadcasting room together.



It got to the point where the club members, obviously conscious of how I felt about Kobayashi-san, conspired to always make sure we were on duty together. Naturally, I was eventually compelled to play that otome game by her.

Well, at first I didn't really care about the game or Liselotte, but as Kobayashi-san watched me play she laughed and cried, as well constantly looking over at me to see my reactions then swiveling back to the screen when I turned to look at her. Maybe it was because of this strange little dance, but eventually, I began to get more and more invested. Well, there was also the fact that the more I got into a game that she enjoyed, the more we had to talk about.

"So, what which route would you recommend?"

When I asked Kobayashi-san that, instead of telling me which capture target to go after first, to my surprise she instead thrust a fan-disc into my hands.

The reason for that was apparently this fan-disc contained Liselotte's main story.

Liselotte's role in the story was the villainess noble girl who harasses the main heroine, trying to get in the way of her romance. Eventually, she is possessed by the 【Ancient Witch】, and transformed into the last boss of the game. An unfortunate character who meets a grisly fate in every ending except for the reverse harem route.

In the fan disc, Liselotte's true character is revealed. As well as loving the Crown Prince Siegwand, she also held a secret admiration for the cute and innocent Finne, but the evil Ancient Witch led her astray and into ruin until her spirit was completely eroded, which ended up in her becoming possessed. In the fan-disc, this is all narrated from a personal diary that she had written.

It was so sad and earnest that I actually teared up a little bit when playing it.

After that, Kobayashi-san recommended that I play the reverse harem route, which is the only way Liselotte survives the normal story.

Usually, you'd have to finish all five capture target's good endings to be able to get onto this route, but since Kobayashi-san who was recommending it already had a 100% save, I could play it.

In the reverse harem route, as well as having all five capture targets at her beck and call, there is even a sudden yuri development where Liselotte becomes part of Finne's harem. Finne is pretty scary.

The six of them all fight both Finne's enemies for her and with each other for Finne's affections, and Liselotte, in particular, is saved from the witch's malevolence because of her deep love for Finne serving as a sort of spiritual anchor. Since there's no last boss, the party beats the Ancient Witch easily, and they all live happily ever after...

*My ass they do!*

If a bunch of important young noblemen, a marquis' daughter, an influential teacher and even the Crown Prince are all still fighting for Finne, won't there be problems!? Will the country really be okay!?

That's what I thought, but Kobayashi-san didn't think it was so bad.



“Because, apart from this route, someone always ends up dying...”

According to Kobayashi-san, the knight character called Baldur had the second highest number of fatalities when it came to the game’s endings, apart from Liselotte, and the reverse-harem ending was the only one where both of them were able to live.

I can only vaguely remember it from watching her play but it seemed to be right, apart from in his own route and the reverse-harem route, he supposedly always dies early when saving Finne. He dies quickly, and he dies a lot. It’s as if he’s looking to die in those routes.

I know that the death of a friend is important for the development of our main heroine, Finne, but it would’ve been nice if he could have stuck around a little longer.

Because the witch is defeated easily in the reverse-harem route with overwhelming force, Baldur also survives.

Well, living is important after all, but still...

After playing the fan disk, I was so mad when I learned that there wasn’t a route where Liselotte and Siegwand end up together! Where is that happy ending!? I remember grinding my teeth in frustration.

“Hey... Rize-tan is super ultra cute, right? Yeah, so, knowing how adorable Rize-tan is, I just can’t help but feel bad for what happens to Rize-tan in these routes. So, let’s play the route again where her favourite Siegwand is captured by Finne-chan!”

But, at Kobayashi-san’s suggestion, I solemnly shook my head.

“No, let’s not... I’d feel too sorry for her.”

“Isn’t that fine!? Let’s cry together! Then, we can use the despair in our hearts to write a Sieg x Rize fanfiction together!?”

“Stop it! Ah, um, what I meant was, I want to practice club activities so... Y’know, like, practising my elocution and stuff like that...”

I tried to weasel out of having to play Liselotte’s most miserable route by using the club as an excuse, but Kobayashi-san wouldn’t let me get away that easily.

“No, but, Siegwand on the Siegwand route is so cool though! I want you to understand just how cool he is, Endo-kun, and it makes Liselotte’s diary even sadder! Also, you need to play it so that we can make an exquisite SiegxRize story! When they defeat Rize-tan just before the ending, Sieg struggles to come to grips with fighting against Rize-tan who was his childhood friend, and when Rize-tan sees Sieg spilling his own bloo- Ah, no good! That’s a spoiler! But you’ll play it, right!? Right!?”

No matter how much she spins it, it didn’t sound like a happy ending for Liselotte and Siegwand, if anything it sounded like a bad end...

But if Kobayashi-san says it like that, maybe playing it wouldn’t be too bad...?

I’m not sold on the idea of writing a fanfic with her, but the idea of crying together is...?

As I pondered about it, a smile suddenly spread across Kobayashi-san's face as if she had thought of an idea.

"Oh, that's right! Endo-kun, why don't you do a play-by-play commentary! I'll do the colour commentary analysis too."

"...Eh? Huuh...?"

Then, she said something strange.

Well, I mean, I guess I was the one who said I wanted to do some club practice.

But, doing commentary on a game like this...?

"See, it'll be good practice, right!? Right!?"

'Haven't I come up with an amazing idea!?' Her face seemed to say, her dazzling smile left me transfixed by how cute and refreshing it was.

And, as weak to Kobayashi-san's smile as I was, I followed along with her suggestion.

## **[For the Greatest Happy Ending]**

“Huh... Doesn’t the save file look weird?”

As I was absent-mindedly reminiscing about how on earth we had ended up providing live commentary in the guises of Gods on the struggles of Liselotte, a tsundere villainess in an otome game, I heard Kobayashi-san’s voice in my ear.

Looking at the game screen displayed on the TV, the save file definitely was weird as she had said.

Usually, the save data tab would display the route name, the game’s data, the location of the main character, Finne, as well as the time the save file was last opened. But for some reason, the route name and part of the location looked garbled or corrupted.

The save file should have displayed that it was April 18th, not long after Finne was admitted to the academy. Prior to this, we had only just chosen to go to the courtyard to increase our favorability with the capture target we were after.

By the way, the common route runs from spring to autumn, and should you have raised enough flags as well as your favorability rating with one of the five capture targets, you’ll be confessed to during a dance at the Autumn Festival and enter their route.

In the reverse harem route, because all the men were holding each other back, Liselotte was the one who danced with Finne instead.

“Huuuh...? I can’t even copy over the save...?”

Kobayashi-san bobbed her head back and forth as she fiddled around with the save file.

“Actually, Finne’s levels as well... Aren’t they all maxed out...?”

When she looked at the status screen of the save file from the menu, she looked amazed.

Because there is also an RPG element to MagiKoi, you can also raise Finne’s levels.

Though typically higher than Finne’s, the levels of the capture targets are usually hidden, but it seems like their strength depends on their favorability rating. There’s also a bad end if you get defeated by monsters or other enemies in battle.

It’s important to raise flags for capture targets in the after-school events, but you won’t get very far if you don’t raise Finne’s level and she’s too weak for battle. She might be the heroine, but she can still die. This game really is way too deadly for its characters.

“This is a high enough level to solo clear, isn’t it? Scary...”

I had said that without meaning to.

If you decide to focus completely on training Finne, apparently you can even beat an event that you’re intended to lose in late autumn after Liselotte is possessed by the witch. This is the secret solo clear route.

To get onto the solo clear route, you don’t have any time to raise your favourability with the capture targets, so you never become more than acquaintances. Liselotte dies together with the witch, and

Baldur still dies a pointless death in the battle. It really is a completely meaningless route. There aren't even any unique CGs for it.

The battle you're intended to lose takes place after the Autumn Festival's dance. Liselotte, who was treated coldly by Siegward, ran away to her room in tears while Finne chased her. When Baldur, who was assigned to guard the two girls, catches up with them in the garden, the event begins.

Liselotte is possessed by the witch then and there and fights Finne, who loses. Baldur is also killed in the struggle.

Finne is saved when the partner she had danced with at the festival hears the commotion and comes to her aid. Together with Finne, who awakened her true power due to the death of her friend, they manage to fight off the possessed Liselotte and escape. By the way, when it comes to Baldur's route, Finne becomes awakened when Baldur is wounded rather than killed.

But, with maxed levels like this, it was possible to overcome the game's scripting and beat a supposedly unbeatable fight on your own. In other words, right now Finne is as strong as a gorilla. Rather, she is a gorilla. Scary.

"Ughh... I give up, I don't get it!"

Kobayashi-san, who had run out of ideas, threw down the controller in frustration.

"Oh, did you give up? There are only two minutes left, so we should go back to the broadcasting room anyway."

It was almost time for an after-school broadcast that I thought I might have to do on my own.

I called out to her while holding open the heavy, soundproof door to the broadcasting room, and after an annoyed sigh, Kobayashi-san entered.

---

"I still don't get it at all..."

After finishing our after-school broadcasting duty, we were on our way back home.

Since I rode to class on a bike in the same direction that Kobayashi-san walked from, I decided to walk home alongside her as I wheeled my bike.

The very instant I retrieved my bike from the rack and met Kobayashi-san at the gate, she couldn't stop herself from going on about the mysterious phenomenon we had encountered.

"Well, I don't really get it, and it is sort of eerie, but since it's all playing out on the other side of the screen, we should still just be able to enjoy it?"

As I said that, walking slightly behind her, I watched that straight black ponytail of hers sway back and forth with her steps.



She slowed down a little bit as I caught up to her, deep in thought.

When I walked side by side with her like this, it made me keenly aware of just how petite and delicate Kobayashi-san really seemed.

Usually, she was so loud and full of energy, so it was rare for me to see this side of her.

“Yeah, I don’t really get it and all, but if we can see the greatest happy ending then maybe it wouldn’t be too bad... But, I dunno, it’s kind of scary, isn’t it?”

As she said that, she looked slightly uneasy as she turned to look at me, the setting sun stretching out our shadows.

“Then, should we stop?”

The fact that tomorrow was the last day before summer holidays anyways, but even though she still looked trouble, she shook her head.

“...I won’t stop. Because, after all, I really do want to see Rize-tan be happy. I did get you involved in it all though, Endo-kun...”

Our play-by-play calls and colour commentary analysis would guide Siegward not to misunderstand Liselotte to achieve the greatest happy ending.

That is what the two of us had decided back when they were playing the game before.

That determined look she had on her face when we were playing before seems to have come back as well.



“I’m fine with it. It should be fun, right?”

If Kobayashi-san was having fun, then so was I. That was what I wanted to say.

Honestly, if going along with this meant I could see her laugh and smile more like that, I’d say yes a thousand times.

“Kobayashi-san, you really are a Liselotte enthusiast, aren’t you?”

As I said that, my face twisted into a bit of a grin unintentionally, but she quickly looked up at me and closed the distance between us as she poked my chest.

“Well, obviously Endo-kun, I mean you read her diary right!? You cried too, right!?”

“Yep, I read it. I did cry.”

Only a little bit, though. I swear, it was just a little bit.

“Then you have to be a SiegXRize shipper as well, right? For me, all I want is for Liselotte to find happiness with Sieg, that’s all...”

If Kobayashi-san looks up at me with a face on the verge of tears like that, then you can bet I’ll be a shipper for her.

Well, there was a part of me that wanted to see more of that cute upset expression of hers...

But I didn’t put that wish into words, I just nodded obediently.

“That’s right, huh!? If Liselotte and Siegward become lovers, or if we can at least clear up the misunderstandings about her, then she won’t ever become the last boss. And also, Finne’s levels are all maxed out too. The route where nobody needs to die... I can see it...!”

“Even though the summer holidays start the day after tomorrow?”

I instantly regretted telling that to Kobayashi-san, whose dazzling expression suddenly became a mask of shock. Did she seriously forget that tomorrow was the last day of term? It’s written all over her face.

“Ehhh, no way no way, I want to see Liselotte’s happy endiiiiing! I can’t wait a whole mooooonth!”

I could barely suppress a laugh as she shook her head from side to side in a little tantrum. The way she’s always so full of energy is really too cute.

Suddenly, she stopped shaking her head and looked at me with a beaming smile.

“That’s right, Endo-kun, you should come over to my place when we’re both free over summer!”

! ?

“It’s hard for me to commentate on my own without your calls, and who knows if it’ll even work if Endo-kun isn’t there? That’s why we should get together at my house to marathon the game during summer vacation, right!? Okay!?”

Even though Kobayashi-san said that with such a beautiful smile, I could barely find the words to respond.

“No, I... Uh... At Kobayashi-san’s house...?”

For a high school boy to go to be invited to the home of his unrequited crush, isn’t this jumping ahead quite a few obstacles?

When I tried to make sure of exactly what she just said with a trembling voice, she nodded with a big grin as if she didn’t think anything of it at all.

“Yep, my house! If we don’t do that, you won’t be able to see me until after the summer holidays! Is that what you want!?”

Oh crap! I quickly clasped my hands together as if in prayer and shook my head quickly to deny it.

“No, I don’t hate meeting up with you at all, Kobayashi-san! In fact, I’d like to see you every day if I could!”

Ah, crap, now I’ve done it. I said something stupid in my panic.

“Then, it’s decided! Don’t worry about it toooo much. Both of my parents will be out of the house with work and my sis is a university student so she’ll probably be playing around, so I’ll have the house to myself other than during Obon!”**[1]**

With a smile of true joy, Kobayashi-san said that. She didn’t seem to notice my Freudian slip, but there were other problems.

“No, isn’t that actually worse!? Won’t things actually be worse if we’re alone like that!?”

Whilst I was getting flustered about the mere idea of it, Kobayashi-san just looked confused.

“Then, if that’s no good, why don’t we go to your place, Endo-kun...?”

“That’s, uh, that’s no good either. I don’t have a console, so...”

Not having the console wasn’t the only problem.

Being stared at by Kobayashi-san’s pure and innocent eyes was painfully burning a hole in my indecent heart.

“Then, why not just come to my place after all? I don’t think we can take the console in the broadcasting club to your place since some of the seniors brought it, and I can’t take the one from my place either since it’s my sister’s.”

Saying that as if she was taking my agreement for granted, I could only sigh in response.

“I... I’ll do it. I’m a man, after all.”

As I said that, a little more bashfully than I was hoping, Kobayashi turned around beside me and held out her arm next to mine, as if examining them both in comparison.

“Yep, that’s true. Not just your arms, your height and hands are completely different to mine, huh?”

As she said that with a laugh, I felt a little dizzy staring at her slender pale arm she held out, and her delicate looking hand.

She's right about that. I was always a little tall, and I do try and look after my body by exercising.

Kobayashi-san was so small compared to me, I could probably scoop her up in my arms easily, huh?

"Ah. Or, are you kind of bored with hearing me talk about an otome game all the time?"

She asked me that completely out of nowhere. Is that what she thought I was troubled about this whole time?

"No, I don't mind it at all, plus we've come this far, right? Besides... If Kobayashi-san is happy, then I'm happy."

There was a part of me that was a little upset she didn't catch on before, but if I can spend summer vacation with the girl I love, and help her do something that she loves as well, then I can't complain.

When I gave her my answer with that in mind, Kobayashi-san gave me a satisfied grin.

"...That said, Kobayashi-san is a cute girl, so don't invite any guys other than me to your house like this, okay?"

That smile was so cute that I couldn't help but blurt out a jealous warning like that. Her smile turned into a slightly hurt looking frown.

"I wouldn't invite any boy other than Endo-kun to my place at all. It would be gross, and maybe even dangerous."

Well, I'm glad she doesn't think I'm gross, but what does she mean about not finding me dangerous?

'Hey, what does that mean? Does that mean you trust me or you don't see me as a man at all?' I wanted to ask her that.

"With that out of the way, let's make a schedule for our summer plans tomorrow! Later~!"

Before I knew it in my troubled state of mind, we had arrived right in front of Kobayashi-san's house and as she waved at me with an innocent smile she left to go inside.

My heart skipped a beat as I saw that smile, as I thought to my self that I hoped things might progress a little between us over the summer.

**[1] A Japanese religious festival held in August. It's the one where they float all the lamps on rivers that you've seen in all your anime.**

*Kobayashi's keychains on her bag are actually too cute.*

**Edited by: mazuran**

## **The Favour of the Gods**

Ever since the Gods' commentary began, my Liselotte has been unbearably cute.

“Even if you are my fiancée, could I ask you to refrain from touching me so casually in public?”

『She's putting on that grumpy face even though she's not actually that upset! Oh, why can't she just be honest with herself...!?!』

『She is a tsundere, after all. When her embarrassment levels exceed a certain threshold, she explodes in anger. However, she's really thinking that she wouldn't mind that sort of thing if it were in a less public place.』

The day after the trouble in the courtyard, we met in the cafeteria at lunchtime.

Liselotte had said that coldly as she passed by me, but because of the words of the Gods in my ear, all I could do was desperately struggle to suppress a smirk.

It's true that if I looked closely, her expression was much closer to embarrassment than hatred.

“So what you're really saying is that you wouldn't mind if it were only the two of us, right?”

When I asked her that with a grin, Liselotte turned a lovely shade of red again as she clammed up.

『Oooh, this is a critical situation! Liselotte has turned completely red and can't say a woooooord!』

『As expected of Sieg. Although, it's such a shame that, considering the atmosphere between Sieg and Liselotte, Finne-chan always has to be involved.』

As I heard Coebayashay's words I turned my head around and saw that Finne was definitely sitting near us. But just what did the Goddess mean about Finne's consistent involvement?

『Uhhnn, I wish we could play as Liselotte instead... Actually, if I really were a Goddess, I'd fill up Rize-tan's 【Favour】 rating with... Oh!?!』

In the middle of Coebayashay's monologue, a pillar of light struck down from the sky like a lightning bolt, heading straight towards Liselotte.

“Kyaaaa....!?”

A soft and warm light glittered brilliantly as it completely enveloped Liselotte as she screamed.

Her blonde hair and pale skin were bathed in divine light for a few seconds before the light faded away.

“Huh... What... Huh...?”

Liselotte looked at herself in a state of complete confusion.

This was the cafeteria where all of the school's students gathered to eat lunch.

So, with everyone's eyes on Liselotte, who had just been involved in what could only be described as a miracle, it didn't take long for people to get riled up.

Standing up on the table, I raised my voice above the crowd.



“Just now, the venerable Goddess Coebayashay has bestowed her **【Favour】** upon Liselotte!”

*... I think.*

I myself didn't really understand what was going on, but I needed to say something in order to quell the unrest in the room since it could get out of hand very quickly.

*No, I'm sure that's what happened.*

*I think that's what happened.*

*I wonder if that's what happened...?*

『Wow... The camera moved really close to Liselotte just now! This... Does this mean I've actually given my **【Favour】** to Rize-tan? Maybe that's why Rize-tan was sparkling like that before!』

As I was anxiously pondering that, I heard the Goddess Coebayashay joyous outcry. I suppose that was it, then.

If the Goddess herself declared so, then I had no choice but to take it as the gospel truth.

“I-I have been... favoured...?”

Liselotte said that as she trembled slightly in excitement, opening and closing her palms in wonder.

The Gods who watch over our world from a higher plane rarely bestow their favour upon mortals in such a way.

It is said that my—or rather my family's—ability to hear the voices of the Gods exists because a certain Goddess bestowed her favour upon one of my ancestors.

All of the recorded mortals in both my country and others that had been blessed by the Gods ended up developing some sort of unique power.

I didn't know what sort of power Liselotte has been bestowed with, but it might be safe to assume that her magical abilities had been enhanced.

“As expected of Lady Liselotte...! What a blessing that the future Mother of the Nation has been blessed with the favour of the Gods!”

One of Liselotte's friends cried that with a voice full of emotion and tears welling up in her eyes. She was vigorously clapping.

It didn't take long for clapping to spread through the dining room, becoming awfully loud.

Liselotte, the cause of the thunderous applause, managed to elegantly curtsey with a beautiful smile, despite how flushed her face was.

『The words ‘Mother of the Nation’ made Liselotte blush! They already see her as the wife of the Crown Prince.』

*Eh? Is that really true?*

I quickly clasped a hand over my mouth, as it had almost blasphemously questioned the divine words of the great Endow.

『By the way, I gave my favour to Liselotte, but can you do anything like that, Endo-kun?』

Coebayashay returned to her regularly calm and serene voice when she asked that.

『Yeah, that's right. Let's see if I can do anything! Baldur! I want to give that guy my protection!』

Thus Endow declared. A pillar of light immediately shined down from the sky towards Baldur Riefenstahl, who was standing a little ways away from me.

It was sharper and more well defined than the soft glowing light that Coebayashay had called down, slamming into Baldur and then seeping into him in an instant.

“Wha...!? Why... Why am I...?”

The man, who had no idea what was happening, was Liselotte's relative.

He was one of the noble sons born to a branch family of the Riefenstahl house and was already serving as an apprentice Knight despite only being in his second year of schooling at the Academy.

The man, whose blonde, cropped hair and blue eyes were both slightly darker shades than Liselotte's, was usually very calm and mild-mannered, but not even he could hide his shock at the sudden development.

『Eh, you seriously gave it to Baldur? Endo-kun, do you actually like Baru?』

『Like... No, it's cause, y'know, he's number two on the fatality list, right? So, I strengthened him, right? If I can do at least that much, then I should, right?』

『Uh huuuh.』

Coebayashay and Endow's divine commentary was so lofty that I couldn't comprehend much of it.

『Ah, right, Sieg, Baldur is destined to die protecting Finne from a terrible danger, so Endo-kun bestowed him with the strength to overcome it. Therefore, can you tell Baldur to stay close to Finne-chan and keep her safe from now on?』

As I did my best to make heads and tails of their conversation, Coebayashay gave me a divine commandment.

“Baldur, the God Endow has bestowed his favour upon you as well.”

After receiving the will of the Gods, I walked over to Baldur to tell him that, but he still looked confused.

“Just, why me...? Was it for the same purpose as Liese?”

Since Baldur and Liselotte had grown up with one another like siblings, he called her a nickname that not even I, her fiancée, could call her.

I was surprised by the wave of jealousy that washed over me for a brief moment, but I shook my head and spoke again.

“Baldur, Miss Finne will face a crisis of grave danger sometime in the future. Protect her. A God has decreed that he has granted you power for such a purpose. Make sure to always be by her side as much as you can.”

When I told him that, choosing my words carefully to make its importance as an obligation to a higher power known, colour returned to his face.

“Since Miss Finne will face a great foe in the future, I have been entrusted with her protection... So for the sake of protecting Finne, I was given power, and similarly, to protect Your Highness, Liselotte has also gained the favour of the Goddess?”

I wanted to ask exactly how he had gotten the impression that the last part of what he said was the case, but considering how grave the situation was, I just nodded without saying anything.

『I mean that being said, Finne is still basically a gorilla, right...!?!』

『Well, even if he doesn't need to really protect her from much, this should still be a nice pairing.』

I couldn't help but admire the willpower I demonstrated by maintaining a straight face at Endow's sudden words.

*Finne is a gorilla.*

At first glance, those words seemed horribly misplaced in describing her, since she gave off the impression of a small and sweet young girl, but once you realized her strength, Finne really was as intimidating as a gorilla.

Ever since the entrance examinations, Finne had easily been the best of all the first years, all of whom, Liselotte included, had been practising and studying magic for far longer than she had. More than that, even though I was the strongest amongst the third year students, I couldn't defeat her either. I doubt Baldur could beat her; she's just completely dominant when it came to combat magic.

Honestly, her combat ability was so extraordinary that I wondered if any of the knights directly under the command of the royal family would be able to hold a candle to her prowess.

Although, arguably the most surprising part of all that was just how poor her performance was in theory classes compared to practical skills.

“On the honour of the Riefenstahl family name, for the sake of the Royal Family, the nation and Your Highness, we solemnly swear to use this power only for noble causes.”

Saying that together, Liselotte and Baldur who had both received the favour of the Gods bowed their heads to me.

Since the House of Riefensthal was renowned for the military accomplishments of their ancestors, I knew that they were very serious.

Since it was that kind of house, both of them came from an excellent lineage. Baldur was nearly two meters tall, and Liselotte was also quite tall for a girl.

She had a beautifully straight back, with nimble and long arms and legs. That said, she seemed a little bit self-conscious about her height.

I can't tell exactly how tall she is, but when she was wearing her high heeled shoes she must have been around 180 centimetres, if not a little shorter. I hadn't really thought about it until now, but that body shape of hers really is beautiful... However...

"Baldur aside, being protected by Liselotte is a little bit frustrating..."

Because of the loud cheers that rang through the dining hall congratulating the two who had received the favour of the Gods and me, who had received their oaths of loyalty, no one heard me mutter that under my breath.

I guess there's little I can do but train some more.

## **【From a God's Point of View】**

“Ah, that’s right, it’s about time... I need to save...”

I followed Kobayashi-san’s line of sight to look at the clock. It really was almost time.

Saving the game, we turned off the console. I fumbled with the remote before swapping the TV reception back to the regular public channels. The midday news report was on.

“But honestly, that was a pretty crazy misunderstanding we caused there...”

I looked at Kobayashi-san as I said that. She smirked at me and poured herself another cup of barley tea.

“Sieg really is the only one who can hear our voices, huh? Even though we didn’t really put that much thought into what we said, things got pretty out of hand, didn’t they...?”

That’s right.

Our idea itself wasn’t bad, but it sounded completely different when it was eloquently reinterpreted by the Prince. Well, there wasn’t much we could do about it after the fact.

“When you told Baldur to stay by Finne’s side, was there any deeper meaning, Kobayashi-san?”

I took the barley tea that Kobayashi-san held out to me as I asked her that.

I couldn’t take my eyes off her pale throat that quivered slightly when she began drinking again.

She’s... Ah, crap, stop thinking about weird things.

Kobayashi-san, who didn’t seem to noticed me staring, began talking again as she finished her tea.

“Hm, sort of, but not really? The key to Baldur’s survival is getting close to Finne and fostering mutual feelings for her, and since we’re dealing with that Finne, is he really going to feel the need to protect her normally?”

That Finne... So, she was referring to our MAX Level Finne.

Certainly, if MAX Level Finne entered Baldur’s route and awakened even more power, the Witch would probably have to flee very early on, let alone have the perfect defense.

Although we planned to do everything we could to prevent Liselotte from being possessed by the witch, having a back up plan like that wouldn’t hurt at all.

“If it can keep someone alive, then we should do whatever we can, right...?”

We still didn’t know how much our **【Favour】** would affect things either.

“That’s right. By the way, I tried to copy this save over to a new slot and reload from previous save files numerous times, but I couldn’t do it at all. I think we’ve only got one shot at this.”

As Kobayashi-san’s expression changed, I understood how serious her words were.

We wouldn’t get any do-overs.



Somebody might really die for good.

Even if it were just on the other side of a screen, it was a hard thing to think about.

We couldn't let it happen.

In order to keep everyone alive, we had to do everything we could.

I was a little worried that my expression had gone dark, but maybe to brighten the mood, Kobayashi-san's next words were cheerful.

"Besiiiiides, don'tcha think that Baldur is the number one choice for Finne!? He loves Finne the most, and his route can give you diabetes 'cause it's so sweet! In fact, it's really easy to fall into Baru's route in the game. Even though I'd be aiming for another capture target, I'd always accidentally raise flags with Baru, and then when we'd get to the autumn ball he'd ask me to dance, and I'd think 'Wait, I wasn't aiming for you!' and stuff..."

Ah, I remember that when Kobayashi-san had been playing the game on her own, I had heard her yell that a few times.

That said, I also remembered her yelling out something like, 'No, no, I still like you Baru, okay!? Actually, I like you the most! I'm just not after you right now!' afterwards, not to mention the deep sense of jealousy that it made me feel.

"Ah, so... Do you like him, then?"

"Hm?"

"No, I mean, I was just wondering if you liked Baldur, Kobayashi-san."

Even though he was on the other side of the screen, just what was it about him that she liked so much?

I didn't know whether or not Kobayashi-san would prefer being on the other side of the screen and finding love with someone 2D, but I felt a slight nervous sweat on my forehead all the same.

"Hmm, well, like, I guess I like him the most out of all of the MagiKoi capture targets."

Kobayashi-san didn't seem to be bashful about saying it at all.

"That's it, huh? But you're still fine with having him attached to Finne like that?"

I couldn't tell what she was thinking, so thinking that it was strange, I decided to ask her. After a moment of looking confused, she suddenly sparked back to life.

"...Ah! No, I don't mean that I like him like that! What I meant was that I like 【Baldur as Finne's Lover】, okay? I just think Baru's route was the most moe; it's not like I actually love him or anything!"

I was the one who looked confused when Kobayashi-san said that with a laugh.

"Mmm, maybe that's it? Endo-kun, you might have a fundamental misunderstanding about what otome games are really about, huh?"

Misunderstanding...?

‘Otome games are romance games aimed at girls’ wasn’t enough of an understanding then?

Kobayashi-san suddenly made a peace sign right in front of my puzzled face.

“Ya see, there are two types of otome games: one where the main character heroine is basically a blank slated self-insert and one where the heroine is her own character. So, two types of people can enjoy otome games: those who like to be in the shoes of the protagonist and those who like to see stories unfold from a God’s perspective.”

‘God’ again, huh?

As I overthought her use of the word ‘God’ in consideration of everything that had been going on, she kept going.

“MagiKoi is in the latter category. When you get a CG of the capture targets, it’s not taken from Finne’s perspective, but rather from a third person’s point of view. Finne is drawn to be really moe as well, and she’s actually in lots of CGs.”

After that, she dropped her peace sign.

“Honestly, it makes you wonder if the devs actually loved Finne the most out of everyone. Maybe MagiKoi isn’t actually an otome game, but a 【Watch Over the Lovely Finne as a God】 game. In that case, I’ll play the Matchmaking Goddess and put Finne and Baldur together since Baldur’s the best fit for Finne.”

I see, so that’s it.

As I nodded like a sage, convinced by her words, I heard Kobayashi-san’s next words, which were spoken in barely more than a whisper.

“...But if I’m a God now, I’d rather watch over the cute Liselotte. Then I could pair her together with Sieghard...”

The Matchmaking Goddess Kobayashi-san sure has a lot on her plate.

At the same time, I wished I could pray to her to make my own love requited.

Far in the distance, a whirring siren sounded out like an echoing cry.

On the other side of the screen, I saw the face of my one time friend, his expression cold and serious.

I wondered which was stronger, the feelings I once had of wanting to go to Koshien together with him or the pleasant feelings I had spending time together with Kobayashi-san now.

“Ah, it’s started, huh? By the way... Did you want to do some commentary? I can’t really commentate on baseball since I don’t know much about it.”

But, honestly, when I saw Kobayashi-san grinning at me like that, I didn’t think that it was a bad outcome at all.

There’s a fridge, heaps of barley tea, an air conditioner, and Kobayashi-san is cute.

...Honestly, this shitty weather is too hot to make good jokes.

**[1] Koshien is the stadium where the Japanese National High School Baseball Championships are held. It's kind of a big deal.**

**Edited by: mazaran**

## **[I Had Already Fallen in Love With Her]**

In the first game of the season, the team from the high school we were facing was made up of regular competitors.

Our team was decently strong for our prefecture, but we hadn't made it to Koshien last year either.

After six innings, it seemed like everyone had lost hope. The score was 0-7. We were probably going to lose the first match.

"...Ahh, maybe I ought to just go home after all?"

When I said that a little louder than I had intended to, Kobayashi turned to look at me.

"You don't want to watch the rest here?"

"I guess, the thing is that... Somehow... It feels like I'm going to cry. Pathetic, right...?"

We will definitely lose.

I didn't know if there was only one cause for it, but whether it was the regret for my inability to take the mount myself, the sadness I felt for the baseball club, or maybe some other feelings I couldn't put into words, I sensed that the only way my feelings would leave my body was through tears.

The only thing I knew for sure was that, for now, the tears hadn't escaped my eyes just yet.

And that I was ashamed.

"Then, if that's the case, let's just watch it at your place. Endo-kun, you live alone, right?"

That's right. Because of various circumstances, I live alone.

It didn't seem like Kobayashi-san was very concerned about visiting the home of a young man who lived alone though.

Thinking about that actually made my urge to cry even stronger.

"Are you saying that you want to see me crying that much? Kobayashi-san, that's a bit..."

Even though I tried to play off her suggestion with a joke, I felt my voice quiver as it died away.

"I saw your crying face last year anyway, so why not now?"

When I saw her smiling at me like that, I finally felt the tears in my eyes.

I really did cry a lot last year.

I had been aiming for Koshien along with the rest of the baseball club until last year, but during a district-qualifying match I broke my shoulder and was forced to quit.

Baseball was basically the only thing I had really known up until that point, so it had felt like my life was over.

That moment had lead to my love for her.

---

I'd liked baseball ever since I was a kid.

My father, a junior high school teacher, used to play baseball in his youth and still served as the advisor to the baseball club at school.

Maybe it was his influence. Since my only siblings were older and younger sisters, I never really had a brother to play catch with, but my old man often took me to baseball games.

I eventually played baseball at the elementary and junior high school level, and when it was time to pick a high school to go to, I made my choice entirely based on the strength of their baseball team.

In my prefecture, there was a high school that had a strong team and was coincidentally located near the apartment where my aunty lived.

On the same floor as my aunty's apartment, there was a room that, having been used by my grandmother until she passed away, was also owned by my aunty. It was decided that I could live there during my time in high school.

My aunty is a single professional who usually works late, so we don't see much of each other. However, since my mother is a housewife, she often comes around to check on me. I'm not too lazy when it comes to housework though, so I haven't really run into any trouble.

It's not as if I was on bad terms with my family, but I didn't know what I'd do to keep myself entertained in a house full of women for an entire summer, so I was only planning on going home for a single week over the holidays.

Maybe the reason I didn't feel very close to them is that I spent so much of my childhood playing baseball that it felt like I didn't see them much.

I've stopped playing baseball now, but it wasn't as if I had ever wanted to quit the sport.

It happened in autumn last year during the middle of a match.

---

I remember when my class was discussing who would be competing for the school sports competition in volleyball, basketball, table tennis, and softball.

"Endo ain't playing in the baseball club anymore, so he can play softball, right?"

Someone said that suddenly.

The club members for the specific sports weren't allowed to compete in them, and the baseball club was banned from playing softball.

The rule was probably put in place to keep everything fun and fair for everybody, but naturally, people still wanted to find loopholes to give their team a better chance of winning.

Finding someone who had played a sport for years but wasn't in its club must have seemed like the ultimate catch to them.

"If Endo is on the team, then we'll win for sure!"

“Oooh, if we have a fastball pitcher like that, no one can stand up to him, huh?”

“We’ll win the next three years in a row!”

“Does anyone volunteer to be Endo’s catcher?”

Suddenly, a wave of selfish expectations for me washed through the classroom.

No, my shoulder is broken, you know?

Well, truth be told, I had recovered to the point where my shoulder didn’t hinder my day to day life, and it hadn’t really bothered me for a while, but it would still be difficult to play anything properly.

Maybe if I took it easy as I played it would be fine, but the idea of our team losing because of me left a bad taste in my mouth.

At the time, I tried to appeal to the homeroom teacher with my eyes to find some way to calm everyone down.

“Ah, Endo-kun is in the broadcasting club, so he can’t play full-time!”

Then, a high-pitched yet strong voice cut through the loud room.

“...Eh, since when?”

I wanted to know that too.

As her friend timidly asked her that, an energetic girl stood in the middle of the classroom with a confident grin as if being in the limelight was only natural for her. It was Kobayashi-san.

“Since yesterday. I figured Endo-kun had a good voice, so I invited him. Someone who used to be in the baseball club would be good at shouting from their belly, right!?”

“Ehh~” “No way...?” “That’s too bad...” As various disappointed voices rang through the classroom, Kobayashi-san smirked at me mischievously.

“Now, now, now! Being in the broadcast club means he has a job to do after all. You guys aren’t going to play unfairly now, are you? Right?”

Sensing an opportunity, the homeroom teacher finally got involved to settle things down.

In the end, it was decided that I’d play a small role in the social basketball matches that took place in the morning before any of the real matches.

---

“...So, I apparently joined the broadcasting club yesterday?”

After school, I followed after Kobayashi-san, who was making her way to the broadcasting club’s studio.

“Oh, you want to start today? Just be careful about the first day jitters.”

Even though I had wanted to say more, there was something about her smile that stopped my thoughts dead in their tracks.



To put it bluntly, I was dazed by her smile.

“Well, if you don’t like it, you can just leave whenever you want, so why not join us for now? The broadcasting club is cool, you know? Besides, if you’re involved in the broadcasting club, you can enjoy all the sports, not just the ball games! We only have club activities once a week too. Well, there’s broadcasting duty as well, but if you’re not feeling up to that there’s always someone who can step in.”

Then, she opened the door to the broadcasting studio near the back of the school, which the broadcasting club used as their clubroom.

With her bright smile never leaving her face, she held open the door and turned to look back at me, as if inviting me to join her.

Into her clubroom, into her daily club life.

“...You saved me.”

With a quick bow of my head, I entered.

It was Tuesday, so the only people inside were two seniors from the 2nd year, whom I greeted.

After signing my name on the club sheet, I was told I’d be meeting the other members tomorrow.

When I delivered the sheet to the club advisor in the staff room, it was time to go home. That was when Kobayashi-san and I coincidentally discovered that we traveled home the same way.

“Everyone sure is being tough on the walking wounded, huh?”

Saying that suddenly, she laughed softly.

“Well, to be fair, my shoulder doesn’t cause me any trouble on a daily basis anymore. But, still, you saved me. Thank you.”

As I lowered my head to her again, Kobayashi-san gave both my arms a light pat.

“No, no, not at all. I really did think that Endo-kun would have a good voice, so I’ve been scouting you for a while, you know? That’s cause the people in the sports teams, especially the baseball team, seem to have really nice voices. That’s why I’m really happy that you joined the broadcasting club, Endo-kun!”

The smile on her face looked full of joy, but for some reason I saw a glimpse of a snake and an apple.

“My... voice? I don’t know if I should be happy if that’s the only thing I’ve got left.”

I didn’t mean to, but a really pessimistic thought found its way to my mouth.

“Ha ha, you’re a glass half empty guy, huh?”

My negative words that seemed to beg for sympathy instead elicited a small laugh from Kobayashi-san.

For some reason, I was happier to hear that.

“But... Even if you break your shoulder, it’s not as if you’ve lost everything, right?”

Then she said that quietly.

“Baseball isn’t just about playing, right? Even if you become a coach or a masseuse or even a commentator... I’m sure you can use all the abilities and experience you’ve gained somewhere, Endo-kun.”

She had always been the center of attention in class, and I had always thought she was a noisy person by nature, but there was something about those gently spoken words that reached deep into my heart.

“Is... that so...?”

Just why was it so? The tears that had never flowed even after listening to the doctor at the hospital or having to hand in my club resignation form suddenly began to drip down my face.

I didn’t say anything as I walked beside her in silence.

“...Ah, here’s my place. I’ll give you a towel and some tissues, and some tea and cakes if you’d like.”

We entered through the gate to her house as she pulled me along by the hand.

No, I can’t.

We’re just classmates.

I would be a bother to her.

At the time, I tried to stop myself with reasons like that, but I’m glad that at the time I just accepted it in silence.

I knew just how unreasonable I was being, but as I sat on her doorstep, the tears wouldn’t stop coming as I wept, crying about the cruel end to all of the years I had spent on baseball.

And, by the time my tears had dried, I realized that I had already fallen in love with her.

## **She's Too Cute**

“Yo, Sieg. You’ve been hanging around that first-year girl a lot lately. Won’t your princess Liselotte be upset?”

A month had passed since the start of the new semester.

After not showing himself for a good while, a friend of mine decided to tease me the instant he opened his mouth.

“Your information is quite out of date since you’ve been playing truant for a while, Art. There were some misunderstandings between Liselotte and me earlier, but that’s all settled. We’re getting along famously right now.”

Upon hearing me answer him with a smile, he looked a little surprised, but he seemed to find my answer more amusing than the gossip since he laughed.

Art, or rather, Artur Richter. Even though he was only the son of a count, we had been friends ever since we were young.

“Although... You’re just as flashy as ever, Art.”

In an unusual style for a man, he had loosely gathered, rose coloured hair that stretched all the way down to his waist. It was quite a sight, especially since the ends of his hair were dyed a deep shade of red.

His eyes were only an ordinary shade of hazel, but since they were part of such an unusually handsome face, it was a relief to have somewhere to look that wasn’t exhausting.

“And just as always, you can’t keep your eyes off me at all!”

Art laughed, his voice like that of a tenor.

It was hard to put into words just how much I appreciated having someone that I could speak so openly with despite my status as the Crown Prince.

Although the Richter family had only been bestowed their countship by the Royal family, many of their descendants had received the favour of the Gods over the centuries, and they stood in high standing with the Church.

Art also had an exceptionally strong aptitude for healing and recovery magic, so he split his time between studying at the academy and working at the Church.

He had been ‘playing truant’ for a while to assist the priests in recovery and reconstruction work in the wake of the floods out in the western counties.

Although I suppose the most peculiar thing about Artur Richter, to any onlooker, was just how we spoke as equals.

“So, just what do you think of that little Miss Finne? She’s cute, isn’t she? Any thoughts of eloping? It’s gotta be an elopement, right?”

As Art pestered me about it, I crossed my arms and glared at him.

“Of course I won’t be eloping with her. I’m not you, Art.”

Since Art was most likely going to become part of the Church when he graduated, he had a lot more freedom from his House due to his lack of a fiancée.

I’d already heard rumours about him and the girl who worked outside a shop in town.

Of course, I was aware of my position and wouldn’t do anything to hurt Liselotte.

As I tried to have him back off the subject with a low tone of voice, Art just shook his head.

“Oh, so scary. Are you really the type to get angry about japes like that...?”

He’s saying that if he had asked that before... I would have had a different response?

No, even if I still misunderstood Liselotte’s intentions, I wouldn’t have ever done anything so insincere, right?

No, truly, it’s not just because I think that Liselotte is so incredibly cute that I wouldn’t want to hurt her feelings, okay?

“Now, now, I was just joking, but still, Miss Finne and I are pretty similar, right? The Church asked me to look into it. Could you introduce me to her?”

Ah, so that’s it. I gleaned Art’s meaning from those words.

Certainly, it would be correct to say that Finne possessed a strong aptitude for healing and recovery magic.

“...Well, similar, huh? Similar...”

As I pondered vaguely, Art looked at me dubiously.

“How should I say it... Miss Finne is... Well, she’s much more of the offensive type than you are.”

He looked even more dubious as I continued.

“Eh, what do you mean by that? I heard that she and I had the same aptitudes?”

That’s right. Both Art and Finne weren’t good at using the offensive magic that typically called for flame and water elements.

At least, when it came to regular methods...?

“Well, you’ll know what I mean when you see it. I’ll introduce you to Finne.”

I gave up on trying to explain.

When it came to things like that, seeing really was believing.

Taking the still confused Art along with me, I decided to introduce him to Finne.

“A match would probably be the best way for you to understand. You and I, or perhaps you and Baldur, can form a team and take on Finne.”

“Eh? Wait wait wait. Two on one? I don’t think there’s anyone who can actually take us on if we work together, you know? My cooperation with Baldur Riefenstahl isn’t quite as strong, but we’d be quite compatible, so wouldn’t it still be too much?”

Baldur specialized in fighting by imbuing his sword with magic, so while his offensive power was considerably high, his other attributes were lacking.

Art, who specialized in supporting magic, would probably serve as a great partner.

I focus on balancing out both defense and offense, but since I’ve known Art for so long, our teamwork made it seem as if we could read one another’s minds.

If you thought about it normally, it sounded like I was proposing to bully a first-year student, especially since the aforementioned student was a girl.

“But if you fought her alone, you’d be cut down instantly, right?”

To really understand Finne’s style, you have to face terror head-on.

Likewise, if Art was defeated immediately, he wouldn’t know what hit him.

As I said that casually, Art stared at me like I’d gone mad.

“...Miss Finne is a recovery magic user, right?”

There was a note of apprehension in his voice now.

“You’ll understand when you see it.”

Once again, I gave up trying to explain the unexplainable.

---

To put it simply, Miss Finne had a ‘unique’ fighting style.

The strengthening and recovery magic that she would usually cast on other people for support, she cast on herself instead.

That way, she raised all of her physical abilities to incredible levels then, of course, used her fists.

『Is this the so-called Acolyte of the Punch!?!』

『Woow... She really is aggressive, huh? Just where did the cute and cuddly heroine Finne-chan who just wanted to do her best to protect everyone go?』

As I watched Art team up with Baldur to face off against Finne in a practice duel, I once again heard Endow and Coebayashay’s venerable voices echo through the air.

That’s right, she is incredibly aggressive.

Looking over, I saw that Finne had lit her fists on fire and was pummelling Baldur into a corner, the latter desperately looking for a way to escape the onslaught.

They were weak flames, but they did their job to augment the already terrifying power of her small fists, so every swing seemed to be quite dangerous.

By the way, Art had already tasted her punches.

Barely a couple of minutes ago, Finne had taken advantage of a lapse in Baldur's judgment to dive straight towards Art, who was relying on Baldur's protection, and launched him into the air with a strong uppercut.

Her magically amplified speed coupled with her small frame made her a terror to try and keep up with in the midst of battle.

"Kuh.... I yield!!"

Baldur, who had been struggling to keep step with Finne after losing the backup of Art's support magic finally declared that.

『Strong! Finne is the strongest! 』

『At this point, no matter how you look at it, can't it be said that she's too strong? This really does feel different from the **【Game】** after all.』

As I watched Finne and Baldur shake hands after the end of their battle, I cast recovery magic on Art.

"W-Woah..."

Art, after regaining consciousness, walked over towards Miss Finne.

Well, if that guy was able to walk straight away after regaining consciousness, I was sure he could handle the rest of his recovery himself. I don't need to worry about him.

By the way, Miss Finne is much the same. It's said that even if she lost an arm, she would reattach it and keep fighting until all the villains had been smacked down. Actually, there's a precedent for that. It was a story from before she entered this academy.

As I watched Baldur, Art, and Miss Finne happily chat about their mock battle, I suddenly felt a pang of worry.

I had thought that since I heard the voices of the two deities, Liselotte should be present as well, but she was nowhere to be seen.

Why is that?

In the **【Game】** that the two venerable ones talked about, Finne was the main character, and until the day that they bestowed their favours, they could only see things from Finne's point of view.

Yet although Coebayashay had decreed that she was following Liselotte after bestowing her favour on her, Liselotte hadn't appeared even though the match was over and I could hear the voices of the Gods.

『Liselotte is secretly watching over what's going on in the courtyard as she hides behind the topiaaaaaary!』

『In fact, she's watching Sieg the most, isn't she? It seems like she's trying to figure out just how close he is with Finne-chan when she isn't around, whilst also watching over Finne-chan.』

...What the hell? That's way too cute.

Then again, Art and Baldur are here too.

And right now, to any onlooker, it would look like the two of them are trying to compete for Finne!

The moment I took a step towards them, pretending not to have noticed Liselotte behind me, a sharp voice echoed before I had the opportunity to call out to them.

“My, what an awful din you are all making. Even the library was swallowed up by your shouting.”

Liselotte finally made her appearance, brushing aside her blonde curl with a flick of her hand.

『Well no, actually, the truth is that Rize-tan went straight to see Sieg after school, but when she tried to call out to him, she noticed that Art was with him so she didn't, and in that way she kept following after him in secret until she called out to him just now.』

Just how cute can she be?

As I listened to Coebayashay calmly say that, I kept a straight face.

Not because I was particularly stoic, but rather because it was just so cute that I didn't know how to react.

“Lady... Liselotte...”

Because Liselotte had appeared so suddenly and so curtly, Finne looked a little cowed as she backed away, showing none of the fiery Finne from the match a few minutes ago. Meanwhile, Art and Baldur stepped forward as if to shelter her.

Half of that temper of hers is just her trying to cover up her embarrassment, so you shouldn't be so nervous.

“Wellll, you sure are in a good mood today aren't you, princess? I admit we might have been a bit noisy, but it's not Miss Finne's fault. Please be satisfied with my apologies instead.”

As he said that, Art took Liselotte's hand and tried to kiss the back of it.

SMACK!

Her hand slapped his aside strongly.

Every time Art tried to make frivolous passes at Liselotte like that, he was severely put into place.

Even though Liselotte always glared at him like she would a filthy bug, it didn't seem to discourage him much.

“My business right now is with Finne.”



Speaking with a polite curtness after smacking his hand away, she walked past Art and stood in front of Finne, who had changed into sportswear for her practice match and was wearing a holster on her hip.

“Ah, it’s true after all. Such a deplorably shabby wand...”

In that way, Liselotte took Finne’s wand and held it in her hand.

“If you use such a thing, aren’t you only going to cause trouble for others?”

In the same breath, Liselotte strongly gripped Finne’s wand in the middle and broke it apart with her hand.

“Oh my, it really must be defective after all, to be broken so easily...”

『Liselotte broke it on purpose!』

『But if Liselotte could break it with so little effort, it really must have been dangerous? If it broke like that while Finne-chan was channeling magic, she could be really hurt.』

Looking at the shattered piece of wood that used to be a wand with cold eyes, Liselotte threw it aside, making Art and Baldur look incensed.

But, after hearing her real intentions through the voices of the Gods, I calmed them down with a quick gesture when they looked ready to yell angrily.

Certainly, if Finne used such a wand, it could end up being dangerous.

Well, not that she really used wands.

A magic wand is a tool that is used to channel magical energy over a distance.

If you’re casting magic on yourself or something you’re touching directly, it’s unnecessary.

‘I don’t know if I really need to use it, but it feels like something I have to wield to be a proper magician...’ Finne had told me earlier.

As if to back that up, Finne didn’t seem particularly shocked by her wand suddenly being broken.

“A poor tool reflects a poor owner, don’t you agree? Therefore, I will give you my spare wand, which should be a little better than that defective thing. Will that do?”



As she said that, Liselotte took out an incredibly expensive looking, top-of-the-line wand that appeared as if it had been custom built to fit both Finne's hand as well as her magical attributes from her dress pocket.

Since Liselotte's magic favours balance like I do, it wouldn't suit her at all.

Ah, what the hell, she's too cute!

I, as well as Art and Baldur, who seemed to have finally grasped the situation, did our best to keep straight faces. Art struggled to stop the corners of his mouth from turning up, coughing to suppress his laughter. Endure it...!

『Ohhh, it's the wand that Liselotte had specially made but has held on to for a week while worrying out of her mind about just what to do with it!』

『I see, so she was wondering how to give it to Finne-chan? I thought it was strange how she was constantly fidgeting with that wand in her pocket whenever she was near Finne-chan.』

Ah, I'm done for.

After hearing Endow and Coebayashay's words, I covered my face with my hands and looked up at the sky.

SHE'S TOO CUUUUTE!!

After a few seconds of bashful agony, I once again returned to my incredibly enjoyable work of watching Liselotte.

Meanwhile, Finne didn't seem to quite understand just how valuable the wand really was. She stared at it in confusion, but Liselotte kept holding it out with a silent straight face, desperately fighting her embarrassment.

“F-Finne, I suggest you take it...”

“That wand isn't bad at all. Ah, you should think of it as an apology from Liese for breaking your previous wand and take it.”

As Art struggled desperately to swallow down his laughter, Baldur awkwardly encouraged Finne.

Liselotte eyes twitched as she turned to stare daggers at the two of them but, yeah, that only made her look all the cuter.

## **Liselotte's Side (Part 1)**

Recently the Crown Prince, His Highness Prince Siegward, has been acting strangely.

Although the two of us are engaged, neither of us had the opportunity to meet with the other often before attending the academy, so we're still not very close to one another.

His Highness is calm in mind and spirit while I'm strong willed and not cute at all. It's difficult to say we suit one another.

I don't want to believe it, but I know he doesn't like me.

We have never called each other by nicknames, and unlike Artur Richter, I have never held a casual conversation with His Highness.

There has always been a sense of distance between us.

However...

Even so...

"Finne. It is unbecoming to be so familiar with a gentleman who already has a fiancée. Putting the case of Artur and Bard aside... His Highness is officially engaged to me. Even if you do not care about what people think, there might still be trouble if you are gossiped about in vulgar rumours related to His Highness and me. Do I make myself clear?"

Just why is it that I can only speak in such a curt and uptight way?

Even though I hate how I sound, my words don't stop.

The cute girl on the other end of my venomous words looked like she was on the verge of tears.

"Liselotte, are you jealous?"

Yet despite that, His Highness boldly cut into the heavy atmosphere between myself and the poor Finne with an effortlessly elegant smile on his face.

"W-What, that is... I..."

Ah, it really is strange after all.

Why was His Highness looking at me with such a heartwarming smile?

A mixture of shame for having been so easily read and a desire to cry at the stare of those tender amber eyes washed over me.

All I could do was foolishly stand there with my mouth agape, struggling to find any words.

My cheeks were getting warmer.

“During the practice match before, I didn’t call out to you because I didn’t know if a lady would be interested in seeing such things. I never had any intention of shunning you or leaving you out.”

It really is strange after all.

Lately, it feels as if His Highness can read me perfectly.

And what’s more, his eyes... Was he really looking at me with eyes like I was someone dear to him?

“So I apologize if I made you feel lonely.”

I was lonely.

It was as if he had laid my heart bare for all to see... I’m embarrassed, I’m happy, and I’m embarrassed for being so happy... Basically, jeez, I don’t know what to think.

“I... It’s nothing like that, however, ah, my pride and honour won’t allow... Ah! ...Uu!!”

Those hateful words began to tumble out of my mouth without permission once again, but I angrily tried to bite them back.

Feeling like I couldn’t stay around them any longer, even though it was rude and unbecoming, I tried to escape without offering a proper parting.

“Where are you going, my adorable lady? Isn’t it important that you’re here as well, to prevent any vulgar rumours from starting?”

But before I could, His Highness caught my hand.

As I looked back with teary eyes, I saw His Highness, Bard, Artur Richter and even Finne with warm smiles on their faces even though I had just done something incredibly rude.

Why?

Just why was it so?

“...au...”

Lost in confusion, a small sound escaped from my lips like a whistle.

“What on earth? That’s too cute.”

His Highness said that with a completely straight face.

“...Huh?”

What? Too cute?

He was calling me cute? Like Finne?

“Heey, earth to Sieeeeg, have you forgotten that we’re here too?”

In amazement, Artur Richter called out to His Highness.

“Don’t you think you’re too mean too, princess...? Even though you smacked my hand away, you let Sieg take it so easily.”

Despite how embarrassing it was to hear those frivolous words behind his smile... I couldn't shake off His Highness' hand. It goes without saying that I couldn't smack it away either.

"Well that's because she's my fiancée, right?"

His Highness, saying that with a calm smile, slowly bent down to place his lips on my hand just like Artur had attempted to before.

"...Ah."

His lips touched it.

I needn't even say it.

And when he looked up at me, I... Ah...

"Liselotte!?"

As of late, the thumping of my heart wakes me before the sun rises and I open my eyes.

Horrible, horrible dreams. Terrible nightmares that swallow me whole in a dark abyss of envy as I sleep are enough to shake me awake in a cold sweat.

I don't sleep well anymore, and I'm constantly irritated and wondering what is wrong with me. I'm ashamed by it. To put it simply...

I feel like I am losing my mind.

The last thing I saw was that bright blonde hair and those amber eyes.

Prince Siegward's colours.

My light.

My love.

I love him so much that the word love doesn't do my overwhelming feelings justice.

I love Prince Siegward.

As I lost consciousness, that was the only thing that was clear in my clouded mind.

## **Liselotte's Side (Part 2)**

“...A Prince.”

The first time I met him, I was only five years old. When I forgot the polite words of greeting that I had practised over and over again, it was as if time stood still. I couldn't even remember to curtsy, so I stood rooted in place stiffly as if my soul had left my body.

“Liese... Liese... Liselotte!”

I remember that my fussing father had called out my name and snapped me out of the trance I was in. I had curtsied hurriedly, bowing my head to him.

It was because my first meeting with the Crown Prince, His Highness Siegward, was a stunning occasion for me.

His pure blonde hair and amber eyes.

He looked just like Lilena, the Goddess of Creation, as if he had suddenly stepped out of the pages of myth.

Even though he was still so young, his delicate charm and good looks were obvious to everyone that saw him, but above all, his warm and gentle smile lit something deep within me. He was like a fairytale prince. I still feel the same way now.

Thinking back on it now, it was probably love at first sight.

When the adults had told us to play together as they discussed business, we left for the garden of the Royal Palace, but I don't remember what we did.

All I can remember was how happy I was just to gaze at him. With his kind smile and beautiful face, it was like he was an impossible ideal.

Later that day, when I was told that in the future I would be marrying this 'Prince' when I grew up, I was over the moon.

I remember excitedly telling my father just how amazing I thought Siegward was. About how I liked him and hoped that he would like me. About how I would do my best at both the Queen's education and my sword and magic training as a Lady of the Riefenstahl family. Even during the etiquette classes that other noble children dreaded, I would do everything I could.

Then, with a strange sadness in his expression, my father smiled as he stroked my head.

“I don't mind if you tell me such things, but remember to keep these feelings of yours a secret, Liselotte. For His Highness isn't in a position where he can talk about what he likes and dislikes.”

“...Why?”

“That is because he will one day become this country's king. As the Crown Prince, if he says he loves one thing or hates another, it could very easily impact politics because of the influence his position holds. He too knows this all too well. Of course, no one would be happier than I if the both of you had



a good relationship with one another, but if you try and push your own selfish feelings of liking him or wanting to be liked back onto him, you risk driving him into a corner.”

To put it simply, even though I didn’t understand it back then, I know now that love has very little to do with the realities of a political marriage.

Even if I expressed my feelings of affection, he wasn’t in a position to openly reciprocate them.

But at the time, I was still just a child. “It’s so strange that he can’t say what he really likes or dislikes. I feel sorry for him.” Even though I seemed to accept my father’s words on the surface, those were my true thoughts back then.

Yet with those thoughts nestled in the corner of my mind, as I saw more of Prince Siegwand, I slowly began to realize that although he was the kind of person who would smile anywhere and at any time, his eyes never reflected that warmth. It wasn’t as if you could see horrible emotions in them. Rather, you couldn’t glean anything from those cold eyes at all.

At first, I thought it was simply his naturally calm disposition, but when I thought about how it was really a reflection of how much he had to hold back his feelings, somehow it made me want to cry.

“Father, I... I want to support him. Even if he cannot love anyone, I want to love him. I want to stand by his side.”

Last year, I declared that to my father.

Before attending the academy myself, I came to tour the grounds and coincidentally saw His Highness surrounded by all sorts of people.

Artur Richter wasn’t there at the time, yet His Highness shared his smile equally with all of them.

To show favour to all was to show favour to none.

Apart from Artur Richter, who was a special person to His Highness, I, who was his fiancée for the time being, and the girl he had yet to meet then but was surely friends with now, Finne...

Apart from a select few people, because of the shifting tides of noble political allegiance, he had no choice but to keep the students of the school at an arm’s length.

It was only then that I finally understood.

It was so sad and lonely that I felt like crying.

In the beginning, I had admired him.

Then, that turned into compassion and sympathy for his circumstances.

The feelings that had built up in my heart had blossomed into a deep love.

Before I realized it, that person who was drowning in his own loneliness despite being beloved by so many... I loved him. I loved him so much.

Therefore, I was happy just being able to watch him from afar.

I was happy just to be seen and respected as such a person’s fiancée.

Even if we had only ever met formally, I was happy.  
It was then that it came.

I do not mean Finne. But, it was something that appeared at the same time Finne did, that thing.

By the time I had noticed its strange existence, that thing had already burrowed its way into the depths of my heart.

After that, whenever I saw Finne together with His Highness, my heart raged.

I felt swallowed up by all the horrible thoughts that poured into me.

*No.*

*Please don't hate me.*

*I love you.*

*Don't look at anyone else.*

*I hate that girl.*

*Don't take my light away.*

*I love you.*

*He's mine.*

*I hate you.*

*I love you.*

*Therefore...*

*i wont forgive you i wont forgive you i wont forgive you, ■■■■■*

*Why are you pushing me away, ■■■■■■■■■?*

Whenever I was swallowed up by that thing, my expression would turn ugly, twisted and warped with jealousy. Venomous bile in the form of words spewed from my mouth, and my body did terrible things. “Finne. It is unbecoming to be so familiar with a gentleman who already has a fiancée. Putting the case of Artur and Bard aside... His Highness is officially engaged to me. Even if you do not care about what people think, there might still be trouble if you are gossiped about in vulgar rumours related to His Highness and me. Could you please keep that in mind?”

Why is it that I can only speak in such a curt and uptight way?

If I only say things like that over and over again, I'll be hated.

Even if he disliked or hated something, he wouldn't say it. He couldn't say it.

Did he already hate me? There's no way for me to know.

Thinking back... Ah, those were the words I had said just a little while ago...

『Liselotte's jealousy is plain to see!』

『It must be the influence of the Ancient Witch, don't you agree? Why else would she look so pained when she said such jealous things?』

Suddenly, I heard two voices. They were strong but warm.

【The Ancient Witch】

The moment I heard the woman's voice say that, somehow I knew what it was instinctively. It was that. That black thing.

That horrible existence that had driven me to bear a grudge against Finne.

The true nature of it, the real identity of that thing, was an Ancient Witch.

『Wait, Liselotte has suddenly fainted...!? Is this really due to the influence of the Ancient Witch's spell in an attempt to undermine Liselotte...!?』

This didn't feel like the usual nightmares. Usually, they dwelled on things that had happened, never letting me escape the darkness, but this was different. Just what were these strange voices?

『We won't let you get away with this, Ancient Witch! Rize-tan, I'll definitely protect you, okay!? I promise that I will absolutely not let you die, okay!?』

When I heard that woman's powerful shout, I felt something stir in my heart.

『But unfortunately, our voices can't reach Liselotte...!』

『That's right. We have no choice but to hope that Sieg will do his best. All we can do is have faith that he'll listen to our commentary and then pray that Rize-tan can be happy, stay alive, find love with the person she adores the most, and be strong enough not to lose to the Witch... All we can do is pray.』

As they repeated those heartfelt words over and over again, slowly but surely, it felt as if a warm and gentle power flowed from them, denying the power of that hateful, dark thing.

I managed to calm down.

Ah, maybe for once, I might be able to get a good night's sleep.

It was then that I suddenly felt the sensation of my stiff body being lifted up.

Up I went, swaying softly side to side.

For some reason, I felt relieved.

Like this, I would be alright. That's what I thought.

『Uwaaaaah... T-That's a powerful princess carry...!』

The woman's voice sounded somewhat strained.

『Ah, stop it, Kobayashi-san! That hurts!』

The man tried to calm the woman down, but it didn't seem to be going well. In fact, she only got more excited.

『But Sieg is princess carrying Liselotte! That never happens in the game...!』

When I heard the woman's happy voice, I felt happy too. I'm happy. I'm glad. I love him.

『I-I get it, I get it already so... Wait, Liselotte is smiling...? It's like she's happy just being near Sieeeeg! As for Sieg, it looks like he's struggling to contain himself because Liselotte is so cute!』



『As expected of Liselotte. She possesses incredible destructive power even when she's unconscious.』

What nonsense were they talking about? It'd be impossible for me to be 'cute,' as they had called me.

This really was just a dream then, after all. A strange and mysterious dream. A strange dream, but... a happy one. I preferred it to the nightmares I usually suffered through.

The voices of those two faded away. I fell into a deep and dreamless sleep.

But as I fell into that sleep, I only had one thing on my mind.

*So long as I never lose sight of my love for Prince Siegwand, I won't fear the Ancient Witch. I will remain myself.*

And with those words, I was convinced.

## **In the Carriage**

When I asked Artur and Finne for a diagnosis, they told me Liselotte was ‘just asleep’, so I decided to send her home.

After carrying her to the Marquis of Riefenstahl’s carriage, which had arrived to pick her up, I sat down next to her.

The guardsmen employed by the Marquis had offered to carry her for me, but I refused. I had absolutely no intention of letting any other man carry Liselotte, especially when she was sleeping so peacefully with that smile on her face.

To be honest, my arms were getting tired, but I couldn’t hand her over.

Sitting with the still sleeping Liselotte, we rode in the carriage.

I would be lying if I didn’t say I was a little overwhelmed by the situation, but I had no intention of doing anything inappropriate.

“...And so, this ancient witch, the same one called the Great Calamity or the Black Death, really is that ancient witch? There’s no doubt about it?”

Soon after the carriage pulled out of the school grounds, I quietly asked the Gods that.

It’s true that Liselotte and I were the only people there, but I knew that the Gods were watching. So, I couldn’t get away with anything inappropriate. No, it’s not like I would have done something even if they weren’t watching. Please don’t misunderstand.

『That’s right.』

The great Coebayashay answered.

『I’m sorry. I should have explained earlier, but going by Liselotte’s diaries from the fan disc, I didn’t think the witch would come out this soon. From now on, any time Liselotte’s wavelength is similar to that of the witch, she’ll be targeted.』

As I listened to the terrible portents doled out by Coebayashay, I found myself tightening the arms that were holding Liselotte.

『After Liselotte’s heart finally gives way to the witch’s influence, she is possessed and turned into a horrible monster that tries to kill Finne. After killing Finne, her aim is to destroy the country. After destroying the country, she wants end the world. The only way to stop it is to take the tragic decision to kill Liselotte. At least, that’s how it goes in the game scenario. But the key to preventing that tragedy, Sieg, is you.』

I am the... key...? Coebayashay laughed softly when I looked confused, not understanding what she meant at all.

『That’s because Liselotte is deeply in love with you, Sieg. In the game, Sieg rejects her, which causes her to fall into the abyss of despair. Even though she didn’t care at all if others pushed her away or shunned her for her villainess actions, she was unable to handle the fact that you had turned your back on her as well, Sieg. So as long as you never come to hate her, Liselotte should be fine.』

Is it really true, even to that extent?

Does she really love me so that much her heart would give in if I pushed her away?

My cheeks were tinged with a hint of crimson.

『I didn't want to say this so early since it feels like I'm being kinda pushy, right? Saying that the fate of the world depends on your love, or something like that is a bit... But, ah jeez, y'know, it'll be fine, right?』

By the time Coebayashay had finished her speech, I realized that I was completely blushing. It was a little shameful.

But if that meant that I was already in love with Liselotte, then that should be fine...

“Well... It should be okay, I believe? Now that I know just why she acts the way she does, she's surprisingly cute.”

It was embarrassing, but I had to admit it. There wasn't any denying it. Liselotte is really cute.

Right now, the thought of abandoning or hating her seemed utterly impossible.

“That being said, the Ancient Witch, huh...?”

Ever since the times of yore, stories of a foul witch that spread evil through the land had been told to scare children at night. Even if its body was destroyed, it would cast a black shadow across the earth and possess victims like Liselotte. It was the incarnation of pure evil.

Thinking about the terrible thing that aimed for the life of my fiancée and future queen made me hug her all the more tightly.

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“Y-Your Highness...!? Liese!? M-My deepest apologies for whatever has occurred!”

At Liselotte's home, it didn't take long to encounter her father, Marquis Riefenstahl.

After seeing me walk through the doors, carrying Liselotte in my arms, he looked so astonished it took him a moment longer than usual to remember to bow.

Wondering why he had come to greet us personally, I returned his greeting. It seems that when he heard that something had happened, he had rushed home as fast as he could. I may have overstepped my bounds.

“Liselotte fainted back at the academy. Right now, she's just asleep. I asked Artur, the son of Count Richter, to look at her. Please be at ease. She was just exhausted in both mind and body and is now sleeping peacefully. I would like to take her to her room now, if I may.”

As I finished talking, the Marquis shook his head in sheer panic.



“No, I couldn’t possibly! I couldn’t bear to burden Your Highness anymore than I already have...! Hey, somebody, quickly...!”

I shook my head as the Marquis turned to call out to his household servants.

“No, I have no intention of leaving my fiancée in anyone else’s arms. Please guide me to her room.”

Hearing my words, the Marquis simply stood with his mouth agape as if they had left him dumbfounded.

Is it really alright for the foremost general of the country to be caught off guard like this? I couldn’t help but think that.

“...”

After staring at my face in stunned silence for a while, his violet eyes, identical in shade to Liselotte’s, began to well up with tears.

“Wha-!? W-What’s the matter, Marquis!?”

When I shouted that out in a panic, the Marquis finally opened his mouth as he wiped away his tears.

“Ah, no, it’s just that it made me think...”

“Oh, I see. Of course, you would think ill of me doing this, as a father...”

Even if I was her fiancée, there was no father in the world who wouldn’t hate the sight of his daughter being hauled away unconscious to a private room like this. It can’t be helped, I might have to entrust Liselotte to her father or one of his maids instead.

“No, that’s not the case at all! It was just I was so happy I got a little emotional... It’s as if that child’s dream really came true...”

Surprisingly, as he dried his eyes, he denied my words and instead said something completely incomprehensible.

“Dream?”

“Yes. It was when Liese was only 5 years old. I was the only one who heard her dream back then. Back then, I told her that it wouldn’t come true, but she never gave up, as if she couldn’t give up. It drove her on all the time, and she never stopped thinking about it.”

Just what kind of dream was it?

Looking at my puzzled face, the Marquis gently smiled. It seemed he had no intention of letting me in on his secret.

“...Isn’t that great, Liese?”

As he said that, he gently stroked Liselotte’s head with an expression wholly different to that of the general I had always seen in the royal palace. An expression he only kept for one person, his expression as a father.

“Ah, I am deeply sorry to hold you up in such a fashion! Liselotte’s room is this way, please follow me.”

Saying so, the Marquis started walking.

The way he suddenly changed the atmosphere like that, it seemed impossible to bring up Liselotte’s dream as the topic of conversation once more.

『That dream of hers she had as a five-year-old, could it have been...?』

Apparently, even the wise Endow wasn’t quite sure.

『This is one of the pieces of information in the extra materials. But, it’s not exactly something we should be saying.』

I felt a little impatient hearing Coebayashay’s coy words.

『I see, it’s something that the person themselves should say, right?』

『That’s right.』

That said, even if it seemed like the Gods were having fun with their secret at my expense... Ah, the fluttering in my chest as I looked down at Liselotte in my arms was more than enough to wipe any irritation away.

## **Fuzzy (Finne's Side)**

Lady Liselotte Riefenstahl is a strange person.

Other than her, all of the noble ladies at this academy treat me as if I don't even exist.

I guess that's how it is. No one would bother to talk to the weeds or pebbles they walk by on the path, after all.

I don't have a family name or even a father, so it can't be helped if, from a noble's point of view, I'm unworthy of their attention.

However, Lady Liselotte's the only one who treats me as an equal. Even a rival. She's strange.

At first glance, her fiancée is also kind to me, but unlike her, he really isn't strange.

To him, all the students in the school are under him, so it's not strange that he's equally kind to everybody. It's a rule so simple that even I can understand it.

"Miss Finne, where are we going?"

Ah, right. As he called out to me from behind, I remembered that there was, in fact, one more 'strange' person. He has already spent a month and a half by my side. I guess I'm not such a weed anymore, lately.

A God? Under strange circumstances, this man, Baldur Riefenstahl, became something like my bodyguard.

I suppose we were equals now? No, since he was always asking me for commands and told me to address him as 'Bard' without any titles, I suppose he thinks of me as above him?

Of course, I don't know what people would think if I suddenly started to give him instructions and call him by a nickname like that, especially since he was older than me, so I got him to agree to 【Bard-senpai】 instead.

'Miss Finne, how could I both be your escort and have you call me such a respectful name when I cannot best you in combat...?' He seemed to remain hung up about it, but thankfully for the sake of protecting my peaceful school life, I managed to get him to agree.

Maybe the Riefenstahl family judges people based on their strength?

"I'd like to get some exercise, so I was thinking of hunting a few monsters. You don't have to follow me, Bard-senpai."

That's why I was headed towards the mountains behind the school where there are endless amounts of monsters, but that serious knight didn't seem to have any intention of letting me go alone, as he remained half a step behind me.

It was a lie when I said I wanted to get some exercise. The truth was that I wanted to hunt for my dinner. It would be kind of awkward to say it now though.

"I'm strong, after all?"

As I looked up at him, I said something even I thought was really arrogant.

He was tall and muscular, whilst I was short even for a girl, so it was a little frustrating having to look up at him every time I wanted to talk. So, why not try and catch him off guard with a surprise attack?

“I know. That’s why the prophecy predicting the impending arrival of enemies even Lady Finne, who is as strong as any monster, could have trouble defeating is such a dire one. For the sake of this country’s future, I cannot leave your side for even a moment.”

Don’t you think it’s rude to compare a lady to a monster?

I felt myself frown at his words, but, well, I’m not unaware that I’m strange in my own way as well. I’m not much of a lady, and I don’t really see myself becoming one anytime soon. I guess that’s fine.

“...You won’t be wearing your wand on your waist?”

As he asked me that, I looked down at my clothes.

I was wearing the regular school uniform and had tucked away the wand in its inside pocket. It wouldn’t exactly be easy to pull out in a crisis.

In this school, both the male and female uniforms were similar to magician’s robes, but apart from some set standards, students were free to wear whatever they wanted.

Some of the male students seemed to only wear athletic clothes all the time, but most of them wore a blazer at the very least. Girls normally wore skirts that were below the knee in length, but many had beautiful, custom-made dresses brought in.

I had the mandatory exercise uniform that I was required to buy, but since that cost the entirety of my savings, I couldn’t even buy the regular uniform. As a result, I had nothing to wear other than the exercise uniform.

Well, that was until one day when Lady Liselotte came up to me and said, ‘If there is such a shabby looking girl at the same school that I attend, then the academy’s reputation will be thrown into ill-repute,’ and gave me what looked like a normal school uniform at first, but was actually made with such luxurious cloth that I had never touched anything like it before. What’s more, she gave me five... I still wear them gratefully.

It was perfect for my build, so I don’t see how Liselotte could have ever worn them. Because of how it fit my height and width perfectly... And my chest.

“Ah, no, it’s just that this wand looks so expensive, so I was thinking that I should keep it safe, right? When I tried to return it to Liselotte before, she said something like ‘You intend to have me use your second-hand goods? Keep it.’ I don’t really understand her...”

Then, she and His Highness begin to flirt with one another again. It’s always like that.

Really, such a strange person. Though, to be honest, she’s a very cute person.

“When Liese has decided on something, she usually won’t back down. Besides, I’d feel sorry for such a good wand if no one were to use it.”

I don't really understand Bard-senpai's words, but I don't really have much of a reason to use a wand in the first place.

"I don't really need a wand though? Well, maybe if I have to back-up Bard-senpai with recovery magic..."

I suddenly realized that I didn't need to make a concession like that.

"Anyways, Bard-senpai, you don't use a wand either, right?"

As always, he had his favourite sword on his waist. I'd never seen him carry a wand before. Did he even have one?

"Ah, this sword also functions as a wand."

"Woow! That's cool! Where did you buy that?"

I dreamed about having something like that for myself, maybe with knuckle dusters or at least a machete, but Bard-senpai shook his head.

"It's a family treasure of the House of Riefenstahl. I was adopted into the main family as a result of my engagement and, perhaps because he doesn't have a true son, the present head of the house took a liking to me and granted me this blade."

For some reason, I didn't like the fact that he said that so indifferently at all. I felt fuzzy.

That Bard-senpai had a fiancée.

When it came to the top of this school, although he was the top competitor for the second strongest, he had never been able to beat me.

"...Hmph."

As I sulked slightly, Bard-senpai suddenly looked at my face.

"What's wrong?"

When I saw the worry in his eyes, just for a brief moment, I felt like I'd won a little victory.

"Ah, no, it's just that I was thinking being a noble must be tough, right? For commoners like me, the idea of having a fiancée when I'm still only in school isn't really something I can understand."

"I don't understand it well, either. Or rather, I'm not sure I even agree with it."

I caught myself staring at his face that seemed to mirror my opinion exactly.

"Is there anything to complain about? If she's Liselotte's sister, she must be beautiful, right?"

When I asked him that, he made an expression that made it seem as if he had swallowed something awfully bitter.

"Well, the daughters of the main household are certainly beautiful, but I can't think of them as anything other than my younger sisters because we grew up together. What's more, Liese's two younger sisters are twins, so I was told to pick one or the other... However, both of them cry and complain about how I

haven't chosen yet, and their other sister is only nine... Well, it isn't something I can back out of, so one day I will have to choose one of the three, but... just thinking about it makes me want to go to the mountains and never come back."

As we approached said mountains, Bard-senpai looked up at them wistfully.

"It's unusual to hear you talk like that, Bard-senpai."

I say that, but to be honest, it's unusual to hear him talk much at all. I couldn't stop myself from smiling even though he still looked bitter.

"I just don't know what to do about it."

"Then... Wanna stay in the mountains after all?"

Until we've eaten all the delicious meat that we can hunt. Then, without words... He gripped the magic sword on his waist.

When he turned and locked glares with me, we both grinned.

After all, both he and I were battle junkies.

Running rampant was the most fun thing in the world.

Trying to rid myself of that strange fuzzy feeling I had felt before, I sprinted forward while he followed after me.

He's a noble, and I'm just a commoner.

Someday, he'll be a lord as well.

Even if I came to like him, it wouldn't end happily.

## **A Strong Desire to Punch (Finne's Side)**

Strengthening your entire body with magic is fun.

There's no way to describe just how great it feels to be able to move beyond human limits.

Running, punching, jumping, punching, kicking, punching, punching.

Running through the rugged mountains behind the academy, I slaughtered every monster that stood in front of me.

Was the mountain cursed? It's like there's no end to the monsters here.

When plants, rocks, and animals come into contact with a curse or some time, they turn into evil monsters that lose their minds and sometimes even attack people.

Well, if the monster was once an animal, then meat is meat. It still tastes good. Usually.

The mountains behind the school were actually part of the academy's property, so the students were encouraged to go there to train as well as thin out the monster population. I was grateful for that.

"Where's all the meat today...?"

After finally noticing how strange it was, I came to a stop.

For the entirety of the day's hunt, I'd only seen plant type monsters.

"Perhaps... It's because we've entered something's territory? A monster of a significantly higher level or something like that."

Bard-senpai, who caught up to me, said that calmly. It was a little surprising, since I didn't think any normal flesh-and-blood human being could actually keep up with me.

"Oh, there was something that strong here? Then, we definitely have to hunt it, right!?"

Bard-senpai nodded at my cheerful words.

There was a barrier that was set up around the mountain to prevent any monsters from escaping, but if there was any possibility of an abnormally strong monster penetrating that barrier, then the monster had to be stopped.

So, there was a reward system set in place at the academy that would give out prizes to any students able to defeat them.

"Miss Finne!"

As I daydreamed about the slight supplement to my income, Bard-senpai suddenly grabbed my hand and pulled me behind him.

"...Eh?"

No, um, why are you getting in my way...

As I craned my neck to look around Bard-senpai's broad back whilst thinking something rude, I could see a large bear stalking towards us slowly.

A grizzly bear, huh?

It's a little gamey, but it's still edible. Let's beat it up.

But when I tried to step forward, Bard-senpai stopped me.

"Support me."

As he said that without even looking at me, irritation was evident on my face.

"...!"

But just as that happened, the grizzly bear suddenly began to froth at the mouth and charge towards us, the ones who were trespassing in its territory.

Despite my unwillingness, I poured reinforcement magic into Bard-senpai.

There wasn't any time to take out my wand, so I placed my hand on his back.

Then, a flash.

Bard-senpai, who moved at a speed invisible to the naked eye, suddenly cut straight through the grizzly's neck, and a fountain of blood rained into the air.

"...Bard-senpai."

My voice was low.

After he confirmed the bear was no longer alive, he turned back to face me.

"Why did you do that?"

My voice was full of cold anger as I asked him that, but it didn't seem like Bard-senpai understood what was wrong since he looked confused.

"I'm strong. Besides, I can use healing magic on myself. Even if I'm gutted or lose an arm, I won't die."

Shrinking back a little at my anger, Bard-senpai nodded.

He knew.

He knew, so why?

"Even though Bard-senpai is weaker than me! Even though you're bad at healing magic, you still tried to cover for me. What would I do if you had died *again*!?"

As I screamed that at him angrily, I was suddenly surprised by the words that came out of my mouth.

...What did I mean by 'again'?

Probably because I was so upset, I said something that didn't make any sense.

But even though I was shouting at him, Bard-senpai just shook his head, a slightly sad expression on his face.



“I can never beat Miss Finne, and I don’t think I will ever be able to take your number one spot in the future either.”

Then I shouldn’t have been the one providing support. He should’ve been supporting me, or at the very least, we should’ve stood together.

“But, that’s not because I’m weaker than you, Miss Finne. It’s because I’m weak against you.”

The angry words I was going to throw at him disappeared into thin air as Bard-senpai’s words echoed through me.

He’s... weak against me?

And this was coming from the man who said he couldn’t leave my side...?

“Well, I have to admit that my recovery magic can’t compete with yours...”

No, I wish you’d have let me keep thinking you were lying, Bard-senpai.

“Why are you saying something so weird, suddenly...?”

Just when did this guy start saying such embarrassing things?

He looked a little confused as he turned to look at me, then spoke as if what he was saying was the most natural thing in the world.

“Is there any person who could point a sword at you without any hesitation, Miss Finne, when you’re the cutest girl alive?”

Just what is he saying suddenly!?

I could barely contain my embarrassment as I desperately suppressed the strong desire to hide what was showing on my face by punching him.

“...There were.”

Before I came to the academy, there were many people who tried to murder me.

As I said that to try and disprove his words, Bard-senpai just shook his head, his face dead serious.

“Then they’re not human; they’re demons or beasts. At least for me, it’s impossible.”

“I-If you’re deceived by your opponent’s appearance, aren’t you unqualified to be a knight?”

“Appearance, you say? Well, it’s because Miss Finne is Miss Finne, after all. Even if there was a girl as cute as you, Miss Finne, so long as she was some kind of criminal that was out to kill me, I’d cut her down without any hesitation.”

Ah, there’s something strange going on in this person’s head.

Even though I dampened the mood like that, he still came out with that weird praise.

Even though it’s just Bard-senpai, even though it’s just Bard-senpai, even though it’s just Bard-senpai!

“...Ah, that being said, if I really think about it, I doubt there’s anyone in the world as cute as you, Miss Finne. But even if there were, I don’t think I’d be weak against them. So, please let me be the one who protects you, if only once in a while.”

Stop.

Oh please, make him stop.

Even though I was praying, Bard-senpai delivered the killing blow with such a straight face.

“...Okay.”

As he finished me off with that serious face of his, I could only respond in a tiny voice.

Even if I have more I wanted to say. He had played with me in the palm of his hand so easily that it drove me mad.

In the first place, just what did this man want from me!?

Did he want to make me his mistress or something!? I don’t want that!

What kind of place would I have next to his wife? I don’t want to think about it... Ahhhhhh jeez!

Freaked out by where my thoughts were going, I cut them off.

I ran in the opposite direction, away from the grizzly’s corpse. Wherever the next game was along the mountain path, I wanted to find it as quickly as possible and punch it, hard.

Meat... The reward for a powerful monster... No, wait, Bard-senpai was the one who defeated it, so it doesn’t have anything to do with me... As lots of different thoughts ran through my head, I kept running, freeing myself from the strange atmosphere that had gotten so sickly sweet.

I see, so this is the kind of thing that Lady Liselotte has to go through every day... She sure has it tough.

## **The Summer Holidays**

“The Marquis’ daughter, Liselotte Riefenstahl, is tormenting a poor common girl out in the courtyard, please help her!”

When asked to intervene, what would be the correct response to an impossibly absurd accusation like that?

Should I be angry at the insult to my fiancée? My fiancée might be easy to misunderstand, but I’ll have you know that she really is a good girl once you get to know her. Or did you just see her serious face and assume she was being a bully?

“I understand, thank you for telling me,” I decided to tell that to the slightly dimwitted looking girl in front of me with my usual smile.

As soon as I arrived in the courtyard, I began looking for my easily misunderstood fiancée.

“Finne, you are living in the staff lodgings presently, are you not?”

『Liselotte’s question is so roundabout that not even I know what her true meaning is anymooooore!』

『It seems that there is something she wishes to ask, but is it an issue of nobility or something unique to Liselotte? She’s asking so many questions that seem unrelated to each other that it really does feel like an interrogation now.』

Found her.

Liselotte and Finne were sitting side by side on a bench. It seemed like Liselotte was reciting a list of questions to Finne.

As I had gathered from the voices of the Gods as well as the fact that Finne’s head was cocked at a strange angle, it seemed like the questions she was asking were a bit too ambiguous.

“Umm, yes. They let me stay in the staff dormitory...”

For the most part, all of the students at the academy were sons and daughters of the nobility.

And being nobility, they typically owned an estate in the capital even if their land was elsewhere.

Therefore, all the students at this academy travelled to class from their family’s residence in the capital. All except one.

That one person was Finne.

So, what exactly were Liselotte’s intentions after finding that out?

“About that staff dormitory... They serve food in such a place, yes?”

『Oh, she was about to say something else but stopped herself, didn’t she? That seems to be a common pattern today.』

As the great Coebayashay had mentioned, Liselotte seemed to be troubled about saying what she actually wanted to say.

“Yes! It’s delicious, too! Maybe because of the budget or because we’re all women there, I don’t think there’s enough meat... But it’s not a problem since I can just get it myself!”

『That doesn’t seem to be what Liselotte wanted to hear...!』

『Finne-chan stays in the dormitory for female members of staff. I see, since she’s such a crazed warrior and still a growing girl, she might feel like she’s not being fed enough?』

Finne answered her cheerfully, but Liselotte seemed confused as she started to fidget bashfully. It seems like Endow’s sage knowledge was completely correct.

“Liselotte, is something wrong?”

I suddenly realized that I might be the source of some unwanted rumours if anyone saw me silently watching the two of them. As I called out to them, both Liselotte and Finne jumped in surprise but smiled in relief when they realized it was me.

“Ahh, Your Highness, I...”

Liselotte seemed to want to ask me something as well, but even though her voice trailed off as she tried to stammer it out, she still looked happy.

“Were you talking about the staff dormitories? Ah, now that I think about it, what are your plans for the summer break, Miss Finne? As I recall, the school cafeteria won’t be staffed for a period of time, will it?”

The fast-approaching summer holidays for the academy were only a week away. Although there would still be working staff over the month-long break, all of them were taking a one week break off during the holidays as well.

“...!”

Of course, I had only mentioned it casually, but I didn’t miss the smile that suddenly illuminated Liselotte’s face.

『I see, this whole time, Liselotte was concerned about how Finne was going to be spending her summer vacation!』

『In the game, Finne would always go with a capture target, but... I don’t know how an unmarried man and woman actually spending time together alone like that would be viewed with the etiquette of this world.』

I found myself frowning at Coebayashay’s words. Of course, there would be deep implications if an unmarried man and woman took a long trip alone in such a way.

“Ah, summer vacation? If mama... Ah, sorry. If I can find out where my mother is staying, I’ll spend it with her; otherwise, I’ll just have to stay in the dormitory by myself.”

If I recalled correctly, Finne’s only family was her mother.

Isn’t it quite serious for her to be unaware of her own mother’s whereabouts?

Stepping forward without thinking, I called out to ask Finne.

“Miss Finne, what did you mean by that?”

“Ah it’s... Well, my mother angered some of the high ranking nobles in the capital, so they’re after her life. Because of that, she’s sort of on the run?”

I had asked her seriously, but Finne responded with something outrageous as if it wasn’t a big deal.

“Thanks to that, I almost got killed as well, so for my sake, she doesn’t tell me where she is anymore. Honestly, mother, just what did you do in the first place?”

Finne giggled as she said that, but I didn’t think it was a laughing matter at all.

“Well, since I can use magic, maybe my father was a nobleman or something like that? Apparently, my father died around the time of my birth, so uh, basically they think mama killed him? Was it an act of passion after being blinded by love? Is that why his family wants her dead? Or something like that, but I didn’t really ask...”

『What a dangerous story...! Hold on a minute... Isn’t the setting for this game a little too serious considering its title? There’s so much death in it.』

『Well, Magikoi actually ended up selling really well, you know? Although I feel like there’s a sense of malice in trying to traumatize young womenotome players like that?』

I kept silent as I listened to the venerable Endow and Coebayashay talk.

『Ah, about Finnemama, Finne-chan’s guess is a little off. The truth is actually more peaceful.』

Thank goodness. I breathed a sigh of relief as Coebayashay said that.

“...Is it not dangerous to be in the dorms alone by yourself? No matter how strong you may be, Finne, you are still a young girl.”

As Liselotte said that with a determined expression, I found myself agreeing with her.

The story of Finne’s mother had caught me off guard a little bit, so I had almost forgotten, but it wasn’t just an issue with meals. She’s still only a fifteen-year-old girl, so someone should look after her.

There’s no shortage of guest rooms at the royal palace so it wouldn’t be hard to have her taken care of there... No, if I did that, I would feel very sorry if bad rumours were spread about Finne.

『Why does Liselotte have such a stubborn look on her face...?』

『It seems like she’s concerned about Finne-chan’s living conditions but is finding it hard to just come out with it. Well, what else can you expect from a tsundere?』

As I was trying to figure out exactly what was wrong, I heard their voices again.

Ah, I see now.

“If that’s the case, Liselotte, why not take care of Miss Finne at your family’s house?”

When I suggested that, I saw the corners of Liselotte’s mouth beginning to tremble upwards.

“W-well, I suppose so?! I was on planning returning to our lands, but since I already have three sisters at the main house, I do not think there would be a great burden if there were one more!? House Riefenstahl is a family of proud warriors as well, so I do not think there shall be any problems if there are any complications that arise concerning your mother! What’s more, you should take this opportunity to learn many things from me, such as proper manners and etiquette!! I do not believe a house more suitable than ours exists? Ah, well, if it’s His Highness suggesting so... Then I suppose I do not mind having you stay.”



That's so damned cute.

『Liselotte's machine gun-like ranting can't hide her joy! No matter how haughtily she might try to act, there's no way you can hide that smile on your face, Liselotte!!』

『To even notice that she was getting too excited and managing to tone herself down at the end, what a high-grade performance, I give that tsundere routine a perfect 100 score.』

Both of them were right.

My fiancée is so cute that it's painful. I quietly looked up at the sky.

“No, I couldn't possibly, I would be causing you far too much trouble...”

Finne shook her head bashfully as she said that.

“Hmph, are you saying that our household cannot take care of a single guest? Or, perhaps, are you making light of the Marquisal House of Riefenstahl? Or are you accusing my house of being some shabby and run down thing that cannot even take care of a single girl for a month?”

Liselotte stared at Finne with half narrowed eyes as she said that, but, well, considering that she was doing it with a nearly identical expression as she had when giving Finne those presents of a wand and several sets school uniforms as well, I think it's fair to say that Liselotte is acting ‘Soon d'Rey’, as the Gods put it.

As for the people who were wondering just why her fiancée was getting no such presents, there are more than a few.

Anyways, I understand why Finne seems to be hesitant about accepting such a sudden offer. Especially since she was offering to have her as a guest not just for the week that there was no staff at the school, but for the entire month of the holidays.

『The key to figuring out the peaceful truth about Finnemama is located at the Riefenstahl house, so Rize-tan absolutely has to win here.』

Such was the decree of Coebayashay.

It's not just about Liselotte spending the summer holidays with her friend Finne, but there's in fact a deeper meaning to all this. Something has to be done.

“...Miss Finne, the Riefenstahl territory is famed for breeding horses. There is also a growing horse based cuisine developing there.”

“I will be in your care over the summer, Lady Liselotte.”

As I added on a little joke, Finne suddenly discarded all of her hesitations.

As Finne bowed her head down low towards her, Liselotte looked amazed, but there was no mistaking the joyful smile on her face.

## **What Should I Do (Finne's Side)**

Two weeks have passed since the beginning of the summer holidays.

Riefenstahl Castle is very comfortable. But, well, it really is a castle.

It doesn't feel like I'm staying over at a friend's house at all.

I wanted to talk normally with her like we did at school, but since Liselotte is always surrounded like with servants, it's like she's a real princess... It's a little hard to approach her.

"Finne, it seems that you have become much more well-mannered recently?"

As she said that, Lady Liselotte elegantly smiled.

No way. There's no way I can measure up to this young lady's standards at all. Every time I move every gesture feels crude and I find myself blushing in shame.

'As you are a guest in my home, I will be deeply troubled if you cannot properly participate in tea parties,' Liselotte said that to me a few days ago, and although I was expecting some desperately harsh spartan training, even though she was firm, she kindly taught me as best she could.

The future Queen, Lady Liselotte, is a truly ideal person to learn from, but when I compare myself to her overflowing aura I sadly can't stand beside her at all.

"I still... have a long way to go."

As I said that, I sighed and slightly slouched in my chair.

Noticing how Lady Liselotte's twitched as I did that, I straightened out my back again quickly and tried not to let my nervousness show on my face.

"Yes, well done. But truly, I think you are quite a quick learner after all, Finne?"

Even though Lady Liselotte said that, I definitely didn't think I was a fast learner at all.

"When I was small, my mother had me play the 【Mother and Daughter Pretend Princess Day】 game every day for a week. Maybe because Lady Liselotte was acting just like how mother did when she was pretending to be a princess, I might have just remembered some old things..."

By the way, points were given for whenever I acted in a way that seemed princess-like and deducted when I didn't, and the quality of the food at dinner would change depending on how many points I had. My mother's judgements were way too strict, though, and after I eventually started crying about the food situation she ended the game.

"I see, so there was some foundational learning. You certainly have a good mother, don't you? Even so, compared to my younger sisters, you're a very diligent and most importantly quiet student. I'm particularly happy with how obedient you are."

Lady Liselotte said that with a straight face.

There were three other sisters in this house, all younger than Lady Liselotte.



The twins Lady Adrina and Lady Katrina were both twelve years old, and the youngest Lady Cecilie was only nine.

Those three girls, who were out on a horse ride today, weren't exactly obedient when it came to listening to Lady Liselotte.

They were still quite young so it couldn't really be helped, but thinking that Lady Liselotte was a bit too strict on them might be part of it as well. What's more, the three of them were a bit more selfish and tomboyish than their older sister.

Even though Lady Liselotte had invited the three of them to the instructional tea party we were having, it seemed as if they'd taken their chance to escape.

Saying that, it definitely is rare to be alone with Lady Liselotte at a tea party like this, just the two of us. Usually, she manages to ensnare at least one more person.

"By the way, I had something I wanted to ask you..."

I had been worrying about it at the academy for a while, and now after coming to this castle and seeing those three sisters, I felt even more worried than before.

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Even though I know my place in society, those words that Bard-senpai had said the other day that had made me want to punch him still troubled me. I don't think it's a good idea for someone who is supposed to be choosing a fiancée to say things like that.

After letting everything out, Lady Liselotte frowned, her serious expression only looking sterner because of her sharp features.

After a deep, heavy and bitter sigh, she finally opened her mouth to speak.

"I'm sorry... Bard might be good with a sword, but he is as dunderheaded as it gets. It's possible that, even though he's saying such passionate things to you, he doesn't even realize himself that he is in love with you, Finne..."

"Is that so...?"

He was far too straight forward to consider it flirting, so he was probably just saying what he thought were facts, like I thought.

But, being told that there's no one in this world as cute as me, that has to be more of an opinion than objective fact. Love was blind, right? If he knew what he was doing, then he's being insincere. If he doesn't know what he's doing, then that's even worse.

Unfortunately, it seems like it was the latter.

“This is how Bard has always been. He has never really been aware of the subtleties of people’s feelings, not even his own. Rather, it’s as if he just lives on instinct...”

When she said that like she was at her wit’s end, a part of me I didn’t control thought she was being too rude.

“Uh, isn’t that dangerous? Is it fine for a person like that to be the heir to the Marquis’ position?”

Putting that strange feeling of mine aside, Lady Liselotte nodded soberly to my question.

“We have always been a family that has valued brawn over brains since ancient times, so we have made sure to hire excellent clerks and secretaries to serve under and advise us for generations. Besides, Bard is keenly aware when it comes to detecting malice in people, so he should be able to manage it? Although that ability of his to sense the ill-intentions of others, I’m not so sure it comes purely from wild instinct or his intuition honed through swordsmanship... Well, in any case, I truly am sorry. I apologize for any inconvenience he has caused you.”

As she lowered her head, I wonder how many people had Lady Liselotte ever bowed her head in apology like that too before?

“No, it’s okay! I... I know my place, after all. It’s just that, um, Lady Liselotte, you gave me a warning not to be too familiar with a man who already has a fiancée, so if something happens again, can you intervene...”

As I said that weakly, Lady Liselotte looked up and gave me a strong look.

“I’ll pummel him for you.”

“...T-thank you very much.”

Pummel, as in, just with a talk, right?

Despite my worry about that, I was still grateful as Liselotte sighed languidly.

“Having said that, that man, perhaps he really is starting to realize his feelings for Finne after all...?”

The hell was that?

Managing to stifle down the inexcusably rude reaction I almost let out, I listened to Lady Liselotte slowly speak.

“As soon as the summer holidays began, I heard that Bard attempted to return our family’s heirloom sword to father after meeting with him in the royal palace. Even though it hasn’t been completely confirmed that he will inherit the position of Marquis, obviously such a thing couldn’t be accepted. Father, who heavily dotes on Bard, managed to dry his eyes for long enough to force him to go home, but I wonder if he might fall down to the status of a commoner?”

The look of ennui on her face perfectly said just how stupid she thought it all was.

Although I tried to answer her straight away, I noticed that my throat had somehow gone completely dry, so I only spoke slowly after taking a sip of tea.

“That is... ah... it can’t happen, right?”

As I managed to choke out those words with much effort after getting some tea down my throat, Liselotte spoke as if she wouldn’t really be too surprised.

“I wonder about that...? Although Bard was adopted into the main household as the eldest son, he has two younger brothers and one younger sister, so if there were some sort of scandal, such as falling in love with a common girl or some other fracas, he may find himself unavoidably disowned from the Riefenstahl family. His engagement with whichever of my sisters he chooses is still only a verbal agreement, after all.”

“W-wait a moment! I don’t want anything like that to happen! Titles are... maybe not that important, but to lose your entire family over something like that, it’s just too sad to bear!!”

“That’s... right, isn’t it...”

Saying that, Lady Liselotte trailed off into silence, sipping at her tea.

Not knowing what to say, I sipped at my tea too, but I couldn’t taste it at all.

A strange silence blanketed over us.

“Well, I understand. I’ll tell as much to Bard.”

As I was about to thank her, Lady Liselotte suddenly looked at me in a way that made me draw back awkwardly.

“However... Is it possible that...?”

Huh?

“Well, say I tell Bard such a thing, the possibility that he suddenly realizes that he is truly in love with you and chooses to go against the wishes of the Riefenstahl family straight away are quite high, I think.”

Lady Liselotte wasn’t outright saying that she believed it would happen, but something in her voice made it seem like she was confident in that.

“...Even though we aren’t together at all?”

It would make some sense if we were lovers, but I was just his underclassman. There was no need to get disowned over something like this.

I asked her that with a trembling voice, but Lady Liselotte just shook her head.

“He’s the type of man who would put personal matters before his status when it came to something like this. Due to that, whether it was his position as successor, his family, my sisters, that sword, his knighthood or even you, Finne, if he truly desired one over all the others, he wouldn’t hesitate to cast the rest aside. That’s truly what I think.”

“That’s... that’s... really bad, isn’t it...?”

I felt like I was on the verge of tears as I heard Lady Liselotte’s words.

“It truly is no good. That’s why my sisters are always saying things like ‘There’s no way we can marry big brother Bard! Because that guy, he’s a blockhead! I don’t want to marry him I don’t want to marry him, I don’t waaaaaaaaaaaaant to marry big brother Bard!’ . That’s what I would hear the two twins say all the time. Of course, someone like Art would absolutely not do at all either...”

No, he really wouldn’t.

That said, I felt like I could feel Lady Liselotte’s opinion of Bard-senpai dropping by the second.

“Then... then... I... what should I do...?”

When I asked her that, she turned around to answer me with a smile.

“Why don’t the two of you get happily married as commoners after all, then?”

“That’s impossible. I would think about everything that Bard-senpai threw away for my entire life. I don’t think I could be truly happy if I felt like that.”

As I answered her immediately, Lady Liselotte’s look of ennui returned as she sighed.

“That is... true, isn’t it...? Honestly, what should I do?”

Was she asking me that?

Or was she asking the Goddess that bestowed a blessing on her?

I wanted to ask the Gods for help as well. Help me, God.

## **By Any Chance, Am I...?**

Ah, that's right. I should go and visit Liselotte.

During an official tour of her counties, I managed to secure myself three spare days.

When I noticed that during the course of the inspection I was only half a day's ride from the Riefenstahl territory, I decided I would visit my fiancée and completely reorganized my diary.

*Tomorrow, I want to visit your place. It isn't for a public appearance, just for a private matter, so will you allow me to go and enjoy myself there?*

It was quite a sudden request, but I still received a quick approval.

Well, despite hoping it would be a private affair, there was still all manner of guardsmen and attendants coming along. I was royalty, after all.

In addition, using me in what I assume is another scheme to skip his Church work, Artur followed along, posing as one of my attendants.

When I arrived at my fiancée's place, both Liselotte and her friend Finne greeted us at the door.

"To only inform us of your arrival the day before, this is much too sudden. I thought Your Highness would be aware of just how much needs to be done in order to welcome a member of the royal family..."

Liselotte had an annoyed expression on her face after greeting me.

『No no, if anything, she was hoping His Highness would arrive sooner! When she heard from an attendant about his coming, she could barely contain her excitement!』

『After receiving the news, she suddenly jumped up without any hesitation and set about applying skincare and picking out a dress. Not to mention organizing all the cooking and cleaning before he arrived, right? She prepared more like the entire royal family was paying a formal visit, rather than just the person she loves and his entourage coming over to play. Well, even if it was sudden, more than anything she's happy that Sieg came.』

The great Endow and Coebayashay assured me she honestly did want to welcome me, but Liselotte continued as if she really were in a bad mood.

"Father was here just the other day as well, but since he went out to inspect a remote castle, he wasn't able to make it back in time to welcome you. I will apologize on his behalf, but I hope that His Highness can realize that he is being most unreasonable."

Liselotte said that, frowning at me. It honestly feels like she's really mad. This is bad.

『At 4 o'clock this morning, Liselotte woke up and took a bath straight away, and from then on until only a few minutes ago, she had been rushing back and forth without taking any rests, applying lotions

to her skin, curling her hair and putting on her make-up. Please accept that she might be a little grumpy.』

I let out a quiet sigh of relief when I heard Coebayashay's words.

I realized I might have done something a little unreasonable, but it doesn't seem like I'm about to be seriously hated or cast aside for it.

"I'm sorry, that was my fault. Although I came here with little notice, it was because I so desperately wanted to see you. Liselotte, you're truly beautiful today as well. Just having been welcomed like this, I am wholly satisfied."

After saying that, I took Liselotte's hand and placed a gentle kiss on it. Looking up, I saw that Liselotte's face had gone bright red as she fell silent. Victory.

『Critical hiiiiit! Liselotte is so overwhelmed she's forgotten that she was acting tsuuuuun! 』

『Woooow, Sieg really understands how to handle Liselotte now, doesn't he? He really is someone we can rely on. Good work! Keep going! 』

As I was amazed by both the Gods' benevolent words of praise as well as Liselotte's impossibly cute reaction, Art suddenly moved in front of me.

"Hey, Finne, long time no see! Isn't it about time we left this stupid couple behind so you could give me a tour? Lady Liselotte's sisters are supposed to be beauties, aren't they? Where are they?"

Tired of standing quietly in the back like someone pretending to be my attendant should, Art suddenly tried to take Finne's hand, but suddenly a wave of water magic cast by Liselotte separated him from her.

That being said, where exactly are her sisters? I wonder if the Marquis took them along on his inspection?

"Don't get close to my sisters."

As she said that, Liselotte gave Art a cold look. Actually, it looked below freezing.

Maybe it was because Artur was here that the young sisters aren't going to be showing themselves until the Marquis came home?

Those girls haven't yet finalized their engagements yet. If a playboy like Artur was rumoured to be mingling with them, they might face some trouble in the future.

"I wonder why the princess disapproves of me so much... I might not become a count, but one day I'll be in charge of the church, you know? I have quite a promising future?"

『I don't think he's that kind of character at all, though. 』

As Art looked both puzzled and sullen, I heard Coebayashay interject. Well, she's not wrong.

"In order to be the wife of a priest, they would have to join the Church herself. It's unthinkable for a daughter of the Riefenstahl family to cast aside her blade."

Liselotte said that like it was final.

My fiancée truly is incredibly kind, shooting Art down before he could get his hopes up like that.

“Oh, is that so? Well then, Finne, why don’t you come to the Church and marry me instead? The Church doesn’t view swords so well, but you should still be able to punch things.”

As soon as Art gave up on Liselotte’s sisters, he turned to Finne with a merchant’s smile.

There were many limitations on what a servant of the Church could or couldn’t do, but if it was in the interest of self-defence or protecting the innocent, they were allowed to fight.

“...If I remember right, the Church doesn’t allow priests to eat meat, right?”

Finne, who looked like she had been lost in thought for a while, suddenly answered him with a serious look on her face.

“It’s not completely banned, you know? There’s an ascetic period for one or two years as an apprentice, but after becoming a full-fledged priest there’s only one month a year that you can’t have me-” “It’s **impossible** for me, so I’ll have to refuse.”

As Finne cut him off strongly like that, Art’s head drooped sadly.

“...That’s the first time I’ve been shot down for a reason like that. Why is everyone giving me the cold shoulder lately? If I may so myself, I really don’t think that I’m that bad of a cat-”

Suddenly, in the middle of saying that, Artur’s shoulders jumped.

“Mmmmmgh! Mmmmmmmgh! UggggggghhhAAAAHHH!!”

We all heard something like a person groaning loudly.

As soon as that abnormal voice echoed around us, the guards assigned as my escorts jumped forward to protect us.

As I stood next to Artur, I glanced over to see Liselotte and Finne standing back to back, with Finne pouring magical energy into Liselotte. They seem to be getting along quite well?

“Liselotte! Please help us out here!!”

At the centre of the uproar taking place was the Marquis.

Looking over there, I could see Liselotte’s three sisters struggling to keep a short looking woman from getting loose, as that chaotic looking scuffle got closer and closer to us.

The Marquis seemed like he was hesitating to even come into contact with that woman as he kept his distance from her.

But, the brute strength of that small woman was really something. Even with her mouth gagged and her arms tied up behind her, that bedraggled pink hair of hers was shaking wildly as she tried to get loose from her restraints... Ah, she got loose. It did look like the rope was about to come loose and so it did.

As soon as her arms were free, she tore out the gag in her mouth.

“Where’s my daughter!?” “Is that the reason you came here!?” “Stop throwing punches!” “Stop trying to escape!” “FINNNNNE! WHERE ARE YOU!?” “Why is this lady running riot here all of a sudden!?” “I don’t know, but father wants us to keep her restrained, so we have to do it!!” “Should we knock her out?” “Ah, watch out!” “FINNNNNNNNNNNNNE!”

They’re all so noisy I can’t even tell who is saying what anymore.

The Marquis, the woman and Liselotte’s sisters were all screaming their lungs out at the same time.

Suddenly, weaving her way between my escorts, Finne came forward.

“...Mama?”

The moment Finne said that the woman suddenly stopped in her tracks.

Everyone’s eyes suddenly looked at our heroine Finne, then back to the woman she called her ‘mama’. Now that she mentioned it, they do look similar.

『Now then, the actors are all here and the stage is set. Or something like that, I wish I had a better line prepared. I didn’t expect something crazy like this to happen suddenly.』

It seems like this absurd situation was even beyond the scope of the wise Coebayashay’s knowledge... The person who is going to have to sort out this mess, by any chance, am I going to have to do it?



## Let's Hear The Story!

“Eh? Finne...!? You're wearing such a beautiful dress, and why does your skin look so glossy!? Weren't you being bullied by the Riefenstahls' young lady!?”

“Lady Liselotte let me wear her dresses that she had kept from when she was around my height, and she's also letting me eat lots of good food every day. And there's no way a kind person like Lady Liselotte would bully me, since we're friends!”

As Finne approached her mother like that, she had an angry expression on her face.

『Liselotte looks really happy at those wooooooooooooooooords!』

『Lately, it seems like she's really happy that she's become such good friends with Finne-chan. Good on you, Rize-tan! By the way, it seems like she kept the caveat that eight of the ten dresses she gave Finne weren't hand-me-downs, but in fact, custom tailored orders she had prepared.』

As I struggled to keep a straight face whilst hearing the Gods' words about Liselotte, I suddenly noticed the Marquis approaching Finne with an earnest look on his face.

He wasn't looking at me, or anyone else around me either. The Marquis' eyes were fixed squarely on Finne, as he nervously opened his mouth to speak.

“...Please forgive my rudeness, but, may I ask how old you are?”

“Umm... I'm fifteen, but, why...?”

Finne replied just as nervously.

“Is that so? Is that... so... So it really is the case, after all. Ah, your eyes truly are similar. Just like the colour of the sky. It is a pleasure to finally meet you, young lady. My name is Bruno Riefenstahl. I am Liselotte's father, as well as your father... 's brother.”

The Marquis said that with a trembling smile, though it looked like he was about to burst into tears again at any moment.

『Finne-chan's father was the late August Riefenstahl, the older brother of the Marquis who passed away 16 years ago. As for her mother... Well, the woman who was going on a rampage until just a moment ago, her name is Elizabeth (ex) Marschner. She was once called the Fairy Princess of the Duchy of Marschner.』

...Really?

Whilst I didn't want to doubt the veracity of Coebayashay's testament, I couldn't help but impulsively think that it was completely impossible.

When one says the words 'Fairy Princess', the only thing that came to mind was the tragic love story between the handsome August Riefenstahl and a fragile ephemeral beauty that was still such a popular story amongst the gossiping circles of high society.

As I stared at her in disbelief, it was like she instinctively noticed my gaze as she locked eyes with me.

Then, curtsying elegantly, she smiled so gently it was like a flower coming into bloom. With such beauty and grace, she truly did reflect the stories I had heard of the Fairy Princess, but when I considered just how she had been behaving up until now, I was perfectly confused.

---

The Marquis, Finne, Elizabeth and myself.

For some reason, the four of us were left to try and untangle this situation, and we were set up in the Riefenstahl Castle parlour.

The reason why there were only four of us now was that Artur had asked Liselotte's younger sisters to give him a tour of the castle. Of course, Liselotte followed along to keep Art under close surveillance. I had wanted to go along with her as well, but since Liselotte asked me to hear the story on her behalf, I had no choice but to stay, no matter how unwilling I was.

"I believed that my daughter, Finne, had been kidnapped by the Riefenstahl family, so I rushed here with all haste."

Despite wearing a plain and simple dress that common women favoured because it was easy to move around in, Elizabeth both sat and spoke elegantly.

"Sister-in-Law, please don't try and act innocent now. If you were to tell the whole truth, you scaled my castle's walls in an attempt to recapture Finne, did you not?"

She really wasn't an elegant person at all. Seemingly giving up acting like the 'Fairy Princess' when she saw how the Marquis looked at her, Elizabeth shrugged and sunk back into her armchair indifferently.

"As I came home, my daughters and I noticed that someone had broken in, so we set out to subdue what I assumed to be a lone thief. By the time I realized that said intruder was, in fact, you, Sister-In-Law, the situation had already gotten out of hand. To show His Highness such an unsightly display, I truly cannot express how deep my regret is..."

As he said that, the Marquis bowed his head in apology to me. No, I really just came here to play with my fiancée, you don't need to apologize to me. If anything, you should save that for Finne, who has shrunk so far back into her seat it's like she isn't even there as she hid her embarrassed expression behind her hands. It looks like she can barely follow what's happening, either.

"Ah... Well, Finne, your father, although he didn't inherit the title of Marquis, was my wonderful elder brother. Although if you add up all my sisters and brothers our family had five siblings, amongst them all, my older brother and your father was always the kindest person to me."

As the Marquis gently called out to Finne, she listened quietly as she watched him through the gaps between her fingers.

“But since he was so sickly, he was never truly considered for the inheritance of the Rifenstahl lands... In fact, they said he wasn’t even going to see his adult years, didn’t they...?”

The Marquis’ shoulders drooped despondently.

They must have been very close as brothers... Actually, I heard from my father that the Marquis had been something of a brocon. In fact, if I remember correctly, the main reason why the Marquis became so skilled in combat is that he honed his swordsmanship to protect his brother.

“So, my parents, the Duke and Duchess of Marschner, wouldn’t allow me to get engaged to August, rather they wanted to make sure that I would marry whoever would become the Head of the Riefenstahl house, so they pushed towards me marrying Bruno. Even when Bruno was married to Josefine instead, they still didn’t give up, they tried to separate me from August even when I wanted to have his child... Ah, maybe this isn’t the kind of thing I should go into when my daughter is here. Anyways, I became a single mother. Well, I only realized I was pregnant after August passed away, to be honest. When the Duke and Duchess of Marschner found out, they were so angry I was certain they would try and kill me, even though I was with child, so I stole a lot of gold and jewellery from my parent’s home and escaped. That’s why I told you that I ‘angered some of the high ranking nobles in the capital’.”

Elizabeth told Finne that as if it weren’t any big deal.

Although the Marquis has been treating Elizabeth as his Sister-in-Law, I had definitely heard the story about how the Duke of Marschner had barred the marriage between herself and August. The sad tale of the tragic lovers who were torn apart by their family circumstances, with one of them eventually dying, was such a popular tragedy that people still talked about it today.

“Why...? Why did you run away!? Making enemies of my brother, as well as his wife and child, I could have rallied the entirety of the Rifenstahl house to kill them!!”

“That’s exactly why! An all-out bloody feud between the Duke’s house and the Marquis’ house wouldn’t have been a good thing at all!”

Even though the Marquis looked furious, Elizabeth rebutted him straight away.

“Ahh, jeez, think about it, will you? What would have happened to Finne if you made her the catalyst of such a war? Or me? Or even August? Would you have been able to keep everyone in your house safe as well? Your little daughter... Or should I say daughters now, they grew up so well, why would you want to put them at risk? And, look, of course Josefine wouldn’t want to fight either, right? Speaking of which, where is Josefine?”

After finishing admonishing her brother-in-law, it was as if Elizabeth only just realized the absence of her sister-in-law as she looked around, puzzled.

“...My wife is currently staying in her atelier up in the mountains.”

The Marquis replied with a slightly displeased look.

The Marquis’ wife, Josefine Riefenstahl, was a painter.

She was a venerated artist who made her art under a false name when she was still merely a viscount's daughter, so even after becoming a Duchess, she leaves behind her work as a Marquess to Liselotte and her father and retreats into the mountains to paint. But, well, considering what I've heard about her, there wasn't much much they could do to stop her.

"Oh, did she get heated up about some new inspiration again?"

"No, if anything, it's because this place itself has gotten too hot. I wonder if she'll even come back down until autumn?"

"Ah... Well... well... Anyways, putting that aside! At least until she's fully grown, I don't think this child's history should become known! That's why I was hiding her in the first place!"

Miss Elizabeth suddenly turned the topic of discussion on its head. Apparently, she's going to pretend she hadn't even asked.

"But, last year, the people from the House finally found us. They tried to kill me together with Finne, but Finne is strong, you know? She barely needed my help to beat them all up."

I suppose that means that the incident that caused the discovery of a strange common-born girl who could use magic wasn't instigated by some random thugs, then?

"Finne can take care of herself. If anything, I was the one endangering her by staying close. That's what I thought, so I decided to let her be protected at the school. That academy, not even the Duke's family could interfere with it so easily."

Well, the academy is isolated and guarded against the outside world to such a degree that even I am permitted to walk around its grounds without an escort, so it really is quite safe for its students. Miss Elizabeth was completely right.

"Also, I was thinking that it would be really great if Finne could catch some good strong lad who could help protect her as well when she's at school."

"...EH!?"

As her mother continued on, Finne nearly choked in surprise.

After turning to look at her daughter, Elizabeth kept going after a quiet sigh.

"That house that tried to kill Finne and me, I don't think they will *ever* forget about us, and should worst come to worst, they might even try to use her. As a pawn in some political marriage, for example. But if she falls in love and gets married before something like that happens, she'll have a way to refuse them and an ally to stand by her side. Well, that's just my selfish desire, though."

『Ohhh? When she talks about having a boy protect her, I feel like that might be closer to reality than she thinks!』

『Someone whose name starts with B and ends in R, if her relationship with that unlucky lover goes well, then it's a perfect fit, right? Well, of course, it doesn't *have* to be him, but I personally give him my seal of approval!』

Endow and Coebayashay's voices descended from the heavens.

And for some reason, they sounded like parents trying to nudge their daughter into a relationship.

"Well then, Finne. For the time being, I suppose that makes you my sister, doesn't it?"

As she said that, Liselotte gracefully entered the parlour. As she passed into the room, I saw Art holding the door open for her as she passed through.

Did someone beat him up and then heal him? Although Art's face seemed normal enough, when I looked down I could see that his clothes were in tatters. What's more, he was behaving like Liselotte's servant.

Simply put, did he receive some sort of severe educational guidance from her?

## Let's Do It This Way

“Me? Lady Liselotte’s... Sister...?”

Finne blushed as she looked up at Liselotte to ask that.

『Why does this feel like it might lead to a misunderstanding!?!』

『I don’t think she’s talking about becoming sisters in **that** sense... Well, then again, there was a yuri route between these two, so who knows?』

Absolutely unacceptable.

Feeling a grave sense of apprehension grip my heart whilst I listened to the voices of the Gods, I broke in between the two girls who seemed like they were getting swept up in an indescribably dangerous atmosphere.

“Then, does that mean you mean to take Miss Finne as an adoptive daughter of the Rifenstahl family?”

“Yes, that’s right. Well, father? Don’t you think it would be wonderful if the daughter of the uncle that father loved so much could one day succeed as the Marquise?”

When I asked Liselotte that, Liselotte turned the question back around on her father.

“I think that would be for the best as well. This position of Marquis should have been something my brother inherited, after all. But, well, to appoint the young lady as my successor would be... Ah, do you mean that her husband would be my successor? No, this house already has Baldur as... Ah, well, in any case, I’ll have to talk to Josefine first...”

When the Marquis mumbled out a vague answer, Liselotte glared at him sternly.

“That Baldur has already begun to court Finne.”

As Liselotte said that so confidently, I gawked at her in astonishment.

I didn’t know about that at all.

The Gods did mention something along those lines before, but the idea of someone like Baldur already falling in love with Finne was so far out into the realm of fantasy I didn’t give it a second thought.

“It may be difficult for the two of them to get engaged right away since they aren’t yet lovers. However, both Finne’s life and virtue might be at risk if you don’t appoint her as a successor straight away. If it is for his beloved Finne, Baldur would gladly give up his position as successor, so this ought to all be sorted out very quickly.”

Liselotte’s assertive words had a strange power of persuasion about them.

『No, but, isn’t this still just conjecture...? Well, I mean, even if we know it’s true, she hasn’t heard the fact that Baldur loves Finne from the horse’s mouth yet, I think. How can she be so sure of herself when she hasn’t even heard it from the person in question...?』

It was rare to hear Coebayashay sound so unsure.

“If Baldur can win over Finne’s heart, then there won’t be any problems. If he cannot, then that merely proves that he is lacking ability. That’s all there is to it. For the time being, let us welcome Finne into the main family both as father’s new daughter as well as the future Marquise.”

“That’s... quite right, isn’t it? I didn’t train Baldur to be a weak man, after all. Even if Finne marries another man, then I can have someone from the branch family act to assist her.”

The Marquis nodded at Liselotte’s words.

Then, Liselotte next turned to look at Finne and Miss Elizabeth, whose eyes were still wide in shock.

“If he loses here, then he should be thankful to even keep his position as a knight apprentice, don’t you think so? The kind of fool who could lose Finne to another man, wouldn’t it be unthinkable to consider such a person worthy of the Riefenstahl name?”

Liselotte said that with a cold smile on her face.

『You’re so cool, Liselotte!』

『Woaaaah, what a great evil line! Saying things like that with a smile! What a wonderful villainess! But behind those words you can definitely sense her love for Finne-chan and her trust in Baldur... Ohhh, it’s crazy! After all, Rize-tan really is the greatest!!』

Hearing Liselotte’s words, I shivered in excitement alongside both Endow and Coebayashay, as her father nodded with a wry smile on his face.

“Well then, Finne, now that’s settled, won’t you become my daughter?”

The Marquis posed that question to Finne.

“Eh, no, I... I’ve only ever lived as a commoner until now... and I never knew about my dad... Besides, despite everything, I’m still illegitimate, right!?”

As Finne was put on the spot and blurted that out, Liselotte motioned towards Artur, who was standing quietly behind her.

“Artur Richter.”

All Liselotte did was call out his name. That was all she did.

Yet, despite that, Artur stood to attention like he had been given a shock as he opened his mouth.

“Yes! When speaking about marriages, one thinks of the church! I am sure that I will find a record that states that Finne’s parents had a secret marriage and exchanged their vows before the heavens 16 years ago! I am sure I will find that to set the princess’ younger sister’s heart at ease!”

What’s wrong with Artur?

I felt a little bit of trepidation at the rapid change he had gone through since I last saw him only a short while ago, whilst I perplexedly listened to the reply that he barked out obediently like a well-drilled soldier.

The House of Richter, or more specifically his great aunt, currently headed this country's Church. There were a lot of other houses that served under them in the clergy hierarchy.

If it's Artur, if he sets out to find something, then he'll find it. Even if it's not there... To put it bluntly, he'll have it forged.

"...There are also the Kingdom's civic records. They may be some *peculiarities* since it's quite an old record we're looking for, but it would be worth searching for all the same."

"Ah, yes, *peculiarities*. Such things can happen, can't they?"

Liselotte very quickly picked up on what I was hinting at.

Although, as expected, it may be quite difficult to fabricate important national documents, it was another matter entirely to just have them disappear.

So even if I couldn't forge evidence that they were married, I could make it impossible to prove that they weren't either.

After hearing my words, Liselotte turned to Finne with a mischievous smile, like a child who had just succeeded in a prank.

"Finne, it seems that perhaps you really aren't an illegitimate child after all? Well, in any case, if you were to be adopted into our house, the matter of your birth isn't a serious problem for me."

"Eh? Eh? Ehhh...?"

Finne looked at us in disbelief as she could barely keep up with where we were going at all.

Then, with one step... Liselotte closed the gap between herself and Finne.

"Finne, this isn't about Baldur, I want you to think about this for yourself... Or, the thought of becoming my sister... Do you really hate it that much?"

"That's not true at all! Lady Liselotte, you're kind, beautiful, graceful, hard working and strong! And when you're together with His Highness, sometimes you're very tsun, but lately, the way you've been acting is really cute! It's so cute I think it's unfair! Um, to put it simply, I really love you!!"

When Liselotte posed that final question with a sad look on her face, Finne desperately shook her head as she yelled that out.

『What a dastardly ambush! As Finne pours praise on her, Liselotte is trembliiiiiiiiiiiing!』

『This might be a dangerous situation. If His Highness isn't careful, Liselotte really might be stolen away.』

I may be in trouble. I found myself nervously watching Liselotte, who was blushing furiously at Finne's sudden attack.

After a moment of silence, I heard Finne continue.

"The truth is... I really do want to become Lady Liselotte's sister. But, uh, becoming the next Marquise, that's um, that's a little scary to think about."



As Finne said that, she held her shaking hands together in front of her chest. It seems she's trying to settle down the trembling in her body, but it's not having much effect.

"There's nothing for you to be afraid of, because I'll always be there to help you, Finne... Finne's mother is also formerly the daughter of a Duke. So I am sure she will help you as well."

"...Probably," Liselotte murmured that last part quietly, as she took Finne's trembling hands in her own and smiled softly.

I don't know if anyone else heard Liselotte's whisper, but I certainly did. Well, Miss Elizabeth certainly is eccentric when she isn't wearing her mask as the Fairy Princess, but surely she would be of some help when she puts it on.

...Probably.

"Lady... Liselotte..."

Seemingly not hearing Liselotte's whisper, Finne called out her name as she looked up at her, those big eyes brimming with tears.

"Oh my... You won't even address me as your sister?"

As Liselotte laughed happily, the tears finally poured down Finne's face as she looked up at her sister.

"I... I've always been an only child! And because I'm always moving, I've never been good at making friends either! So... I'm so happy that I could meet you... Onee-samadear sister!"

Finne looking up at her bashfully with tears spilling from her eyes was definitely cute.

It was cute, but... when I saw Liselotte jump up and down adorably shouting out "So cute! I've done it! At last, I finally have a cute and honest little sister!", I felt deeply conflicted.

『The look on Sieg's face seems very complicated...!』

『The fact that Liselotte is able to express herself without being tsundere should mean that she sees Finne as a sister only in the sense of being relatives, so he shouldn't be too worried.』

Coebayashay told Endow that calmly.

『...Probably.』

I really wish you had kept that last part to yourself though, Goddess.

### **[Wishing for Their Happiness]**

After watching Liselotte and Finne exchange their vows of sistership, we quietly saved the game.

Until we turned off the console, both of us were as silent as mice. But, the quiet that had descended upon Kobayashi-san's living room didn't last long.

"...I'm so happy. I'm so happy for theeeem!"

Kobayashi cried that out as tears and mucus began to run down her face.

"I'm happy for them too. You really did well hanging in there through all that as well, Kobayashi-san."

I held out the tissue box I had handy as I said that.



“Thanks! But gosh, really, that was so hard to bear! Can you imagine if I ruined that scene with my spluttering and sniffing!?”

Whilst saying so, she vigorously tried to clean her face with a fistful of the tissues from the box.

As we had watched the two girls become sisters on the screen, Kobayashi-san had actually begun to cry even earlier than Finne did.

In a titanic struggle to fulfill her role as a commentator, she somehow managed to resist letting it show in her voice. That said, although her commentary had been voiced perfectly, her face really had been a mess through all that.

“But, was it really that moving?”

Am I just not a sensitive enough person?

As I expressed a bit of doubt, Kobayashi-san blew her nose strongly, before turning around to talk to me, still sniffing. Her eyes were red. Did she need some more time to cool down?

“No, it’s just, how do I say it, it’s like their destinies have changed. Changed... We changed it... It just really hit me for the first time, I guess...?”

Now that she mentions it...

We had changed the course of Finne’s life in a way that definitely wasn’t possible in the game and even had impacted the future of a major noble house. It definitely felt like we’d done something big for the first time.

“Also, seeing Liselotte and Finne smiling together like that, for some reason, it makes me feel like...”

Kobayashi-san dabbed her eyes with another tissue. It seemed like the tears had started up again.

In the game, those two were rival characters.

Except for the reverse harem route, those two never really got along at all, much less become friends.

Instead, they often fought to the death. Either Finne or Liselotte would have to die for the other to survive. It was as if they were always destined to oppose each other.

But now, those two were so close that it was even making the Prince nervous. That’s definitely a great thing to see.

“By the way, in the other routes, do you find out that Finne and Liselotte were cousins only after Liselotte dies?”

Kobayashi-san nodded as I asked that, since I only vaguely recalled the details of the game outside of the reverse harem route.

“It’s only in the reverse harem route that Liselotte lives after the ancient witch is defeated that she ever finds out... But, now that I think about it, isn’t she taken in by Finnemama’s former houseHouse of Marschner?”

The Duke of Marschner, so impressed by Finne saving the world with her friends, takes both her and her mother into the House's care. It's a short afternote in the epilogue of the reverse harem route.

【It was in that way that the girl who was raised as a commoner became a princess beloved by all.】, I think was the line.

But, now that we know more about the Duke and Duchess of Marschner's true nature, that ending seems way sourer.

“To have... The Crown PrinceSiegward, The Marquis' DaughterLiselotte, The Future MarquisBaldur, The Elite PriestArtur, The Genius MagicianShota and The Scheming Teacher all completely charmed by a girl who's treated like a saviour, won't the country be in trouble...?”

“Right? And if the key pieces of Finne and Finnemama are held by the Marschners...”

They could start a coup d'état, or even rule the country from the shadows.

Kobayashi-san didn't say it, but she was probably thinking the same thing I was. Her expression looked fierce.

“The reverse harem ending really is a problem, just like I thought before.”

“Right.”

Kobayashi agreed with the words I inadvertently muttered to myself. Looking at each other seriously, we nodded.

Reverse harems or fooling around with multiple people isn't good, after all. Nobody would find real happiness.

“So, that's why I was like that earlier! It's even more moving knowing that now, right!?”

Kobayashi-san asked me with a determined look on her face.

“Yeah. I got it.”

As I nodded, Kobayashi-san laughed happily.

Until now, I didn't really realize what it meant to be 'gods'.

It's definitely true that I'd grown really attached to those who lived in that other world and I wanted them to be happy. If I could, I'd like to guide them down the direction that would lead to that.

As I felt something warm well up in me as I thought about those people in the other world, I saw Kobayashi-san's smile, and couldn't keep hold of my words.

“...Everyone over there, I was just thinking it'd be great if they could all find happiness, right?”

As she heard me say what was on my mind, Kobayashi-san's smile looked a little solemn as she gently nodded.

“...Right? I really think that too. We've done really well so far but, until the end, let's keep doing our best, okay?”

Then, Kobayashi-san extended that small hand of hers toward me.

The moment I grasped it, ah... It really was worth spending my summer holidays here, that's what I thought.

"...That's right! Let's go out and celebrate tomorrow!"

Kobayashi-san suddenly said that, completely changing the serious mood from before.

"To celebrate Liselotte and Finne become sisters, the two of us should go out somewhere! We'll have a night off from the game!"

...That's a date, right?

The two of us going out together like that, that has to be a date, right!?

Although Kobayashi-san's suggestion made me want to jump for joy, I managed to wrestle down that feeling and try and play it cool.

"Ah, yeah, it would be good to get out occasionally, wouldn't it? The summer holidays are almost over, too."

The coming weekend would mark the end of the summer holidays.

I'd been gone to hang out at Kobayashi-san's place almost every day, although I could barely remember what happened on the first few days since I was so nervous.

I was always thinking that it would be nice to go out somewhere with her though, even if it was just once.

Barely believing my luck that it actually seemed to be happening, obviously, I agreed to go.

"Then it's settled! Tomorrow, we'll go out!"

Even though Kobayashi-san's words had me doing flips in my mind, all I did was give her a nod.

"Nfufufu... A date, huh?"

I whispered that like a naughty kid.

Ah, jeez.

Honestly, I really love her.

But because I'm an idiot, I couldn't say it. Where the hell are the words I need?

## 【That's Troubling...】

Guys in the athletic clubs live in sports jerseys.

Well, right now I'm actually part of the broadcast club, but as a former baseball player I never really paid much attention to fashion. I'm happy with clothes so long as they fit me most of the time, honestly.

But, I guess even I wanted to wear something a little nicer when I was going out on a date with the girl I like. Not that I really have anything nice to wear.

Not too long after passing through the ticket gate at the station we were supposed to meet at, Kobayashi-san came running up to me with a big smile. My first thought was that she really was way too cute and my second was that my clothing would look even worse if I walked beside her like that.

"What the hell she's too cute... Kobayashi-san is way too cute... Damn it..."

As I muttered to myself, Kobayashi-san must have heard something as she stuttered.

"Eh? Huh? W-what's wrong all of a sudden, Endo-kun? Um... I'm sorry I kept you waiting?"

Kobayashi-san looking confused was cute as well.

The hair that she usually kept in a loose ponytail was braided up in a chignon. With a sleeveless white t-shirt under a haori cardigan, a light blue knee length skirt and pricey looking black heeled sandals, she looked neat and pretty. The straw bag under her arm was cute as well.

"Ah, no, I just got here too early. A-anyways, I'm the one who should be sorry, Kobayashi-san, you put in so much effort but I just came wearing..."

It was still five minutes before we were supposed to meet.

Seeing how different Kobayashi-san looked from when she was at home, with those clothes and that slight hint of makeup, I'm sure she must have taken some time to prepare. Considering how little time I took, I was the one who was slow to get here. Actually, I wasn't really slow at all. I got here fifteen minutes ago. What the hell am I thinking about?

I was just wearing what I typically wore; a team's shirt, three-quarter jeans, normal sandals and a sling bag. That was it. I wanted to die. How could such a sloppy existence like me walk next to such a cute girl?

"Umm, I don't really get why you're so depressed all of a sudden, but Endo-kun, you have a good build, so even if what you're wearing isn't anything special, you still look cool...?"

Oh, an angel?

As Kobayashi-san tried to comfort me like that, I almost cried.

"No, we were supposed to be celebrating, and it's a date, so I should have put more effort in."

When I said that, shaking my head, she had a troubled little smile on her face.

"Um, then, in preparation for our next date, do you want to go look at some clothes after eating?"

“Thanks. I’ll leave it to you.”

Eh? Did she just say next? Seriously?

After realizing exactly just what Kobayashi-san meant, it was like fireworks were going off in my head. Not just breaking up after eating lunch together, but even going shopping together with a promise of ‘next time’...

“Alright, it’s decided. Now, let’s go get some food! We’re gonna miss our reservation!”

With that, Kobayashi-san turned around and began to walk towards the station building.

I made a reservation at a restaurant that specialized in sweets and pasta. We still had a bit of time left before our reservation, but it would probably be best to get there early.

As I tried to follow after Kobayashi-san who had begun to bound ahead, I panicked when suddenly a wave of people came through the ticket gates behind us. A train must have just arrived.

But, just as I was worried we might get separated...

“Eeve!”

“KYAAAAAAAAAAAA!?”

A stranger who ran out of that crowd of people suddenly caught Kobayashi-san’s arm, yelling something incomprehensible. What the hell is an Eifa?

“N-no, let me... go...!”

Even though I saw Kobayashi-san struggle feebly as he held her, no matter how much I grit my teeth I couldn’t push past the crowd of people between us to get there.

“...You’re... not Eeve...?”

The man, still holding Kobayashi-san’s arm, had a puzzled expression after invasively looking her up and down. Was Eifa a person’s name? Who?

“What do you want from her?”

When I finally managed to push my way through and glared at the man, he, at last, let go of her arm.

I started at the man’s face as he absent-mindedly looked at Kobayashi, still seeming confused.

I assumed he was about 185 centimetres tall, but it’s hard to tell at a glance. At any rate, he’s tall. Despite looking slightly suspicious having those sunglasses that were slightly too big for his face on, what little I could see of his face was neatly framed and he seemed a little stylish as well. His clothes looked like they’d come straight out of a fashion catalogue; a summer jacket and leather shoes. Yet despite how rich and popular he might look, there was something ultimately suspicious about him.

“...Ah. Um, sorry. Eeve was, uh, is my lover, she just looked so similar that I... um, it was my mistake...”

Then, the man finally lowered his head. Kobayashi-san breathed out a sigh of relief. A case of mistaken identity? Maybe he really isn't a dangerous guy, then.

"But, you do smell slightly like Eevee, though. But for her to be in this world... No, it's impossible..."

Mumbling to himself, he began to talk so fast I could barely understand. Nevermind, he really is a dangerous guy.

"Smell...? What's with that... That's gross... Is it my shampoo? Or, maybe the perfume I'm wearing today...?"

Kobayashi-san slowly backed away with an expression to match.

I guess that explains why I thought she smelt so good. As the crowd kept pushing me on, I eventually came right up next to Kobayashi-san. Well, since there was such a suspicious person in front of us, I wasn't going to leave her side again.

"Ahh... No, I don't mean like... I'm sorry, I'm really sorry. There's been a misunderstanding. It's just that, the person I love, I haven't met her in so long, it's been hard to bear how lonely it is and, well, I was just a little confused..."

The man said that as he lowered his head in apology again.

A little my ass, get the hell out of here, you creep.

"So basically, you're working on your pick up game? If you're finished, can you hurry up and leave already?"

When I finally lost my cool and angrily told him that, the man raised his head, startled.

"That's not it! I would never do something awful like that! Pick up... Something like that, I don't need to, I don't want to... Ah, I really must look suspicious to you!"

The man made his excuses as he waved his hands in front of his face.

"Ah, um, I am..."

Cutting his words short, the man looked around quickly.

The torrent of people who had poured through the ticketing gate had finally moved on.

After double checking, the man slowly removed his sunglasses and showed his face.

What emerged from under those glasses was a perfectly groomed and stunning beauty. I guess he wasn't lying when he said he didn't need to bother with pick up lines. No, wait, haven't I seen that face before.

"...Kuon... Kirise..."

Before I could put a name to the face, Kobayashi-san spoke.

That's right, there was a young actor with that name, wasn't there?



Looking slightly relieved after Kobayashi-san correctly mentioned his name, he once again hid that gentle beauty behind his sunglasses.

“That’s right. I wanted you to believe me that I’m not the kind of person who would try and hit on people in such a situation so frivolously like that. It really was just a mistake.”

The man lowered his head again. I wasn’t ready to completely accept he was the same actor straight away, but I had to admit that anyone with a face like that wouldn’t be caught dead trying out such lame pick up routines.

“I got it. Then, we’ll be going.”

With a sterner expression than I’d ever seen from her, Kobayashi-san gave a curt nod and began to walk again.

“...You sure?”

If it was my big or little sister here with me instead, I’m sure they would’ve taken the opportunity to chat and take some pictures with a big name celebrity they suddenly ran into like that. I wonder how many things they’d try make him sign...

So as I wondered if Kobayashi-san was fine with it, her stoutly swinging arms didn’t slacken at all as she looked up at me with big eyes. Cute.

“I’m not interested. We’re seriously gonna be late if we stick around too long.”

As she kept walking, before chasing after her in earnest, I turned back towards Kuon Kirise and gave a slight bow of my head.

It was hard to tell from behind his sunglasses, but for some reason, I felt like he had a complicated expression on his face.

---

Back then I should have hugged her tight to me even though she was looking so delicate at the time but ahhhhh jeez when she looked up at me like that it was so cute I wish I could have just lived in that moment forever...!

As I went over and over those moments at the station in my mind, I stabbed another piece of the pasta dish I don’t remember ordering with my fork. Just why exactly did I get an eggplant dish? I don’t even like eggplant. As the unpleasant flavour of eggplant spread through my mouth, I felt a little bit of my sanity return. Isn’t this throwing me a little too out of whack?

“...Just what was that? The stuff from before.”

Finally deciding I was tired of being confused alone about the situation with Kuon Kirise from earlier, I spoke to Kobayashi-san, who finished chewing on her salad before answering.

“Ummm, I don’t really know anything about the whole ‘Eifa’ thing, but since it’s Kuon Kirise, it still makes me wonder, you know?”

When Kobayashi-san realized I had no idea what she meant, she reached out and gently took one of the pieces of bread from the basket.

“Oh, so you don’t know about it, Endo?”

“Uh, let me see... Kuon Kirise and MagiKoi are... they’re connected somehow, right? But I can’t really say if what he said was important or not... Yeah...”

Kobayashi-san herself said that she didn’t know what Kuon Kirise was talking about either.

“Umm... You know about the hidden route in MagiKoi, right? The God route.”

Despite being a little in the dark before, I could at least nod my head along to that.

“Um, that God character who was only a voice in all the other routes was actually a guy you could capture, right?”

When Finne awakens after Baldur is injured or killed in the other routes, she hears the voice of **【God】** speak to her and say ‘My dear child, do not weep’, but if you clear all the other routes including every normal and bad end, you unlock the chance to capture him too.

I wasn’t quite sure of myself, but Kobayashi-san nodded at my words.

“Right. Finnemama’s father is a Duke, so the pretty far-fetched explanation was that Finne could hear the voices of the Gods by being a descendant of a branch of the royal family, and that leads to the God Route. And in that secret ending Finne, who became the bride of God, is taken to the world where he lives, which looks remarkably like modern Japan... And, well, do you know the rest?”

I don’t.

As I shook my head, Kobayashi-san gently nodded and continued.

“You don’t know, then? I guess you wouldn’t, huh. Well, it turns out that ‘God’ was actually an actor who goes to K University whilst moonlighting as a deity, going by the name ‘Quon’.”

That’s... Isn’t that pretty much a one for one with Kuon Kirise?

“Even though apparently it was all coincidental, the fact that his character model resembled him as well was too much, and eventually people started going all ‘Eh? There’s a game where you can romance Kuon Kirise-kun, and he’s a God as well? Kirise-kun is a God so the game must be Godly as well’, it turned into quite the rage amongst the Kuon Kirise groupies for a while because of that, didn’t it?”

Well, coincidences do happen, so maybe that all really was one. But...

“But if you combine all that with the fact we have a strange connection to the world of MagiKoi now as well, and adding on to that the weird things the real Kuon Kirise was saying, don’t you feel like we’re getting swept up into something really big all of a sudden?”

As I quietly asked her that with a slight shiver, Kobayashi-san calmly nodded.

“Hey...? I know the name that he called me before was ‘Eifa’, not ‘Finne’, so I can’t be one hundred per cent sure, but that bad feeling, it’s still there...”

That’s right.

I really did want this to just be some kind of strange coincidence.

Kobayashi-san just had the fortune to by chance run into a good looking actor, and that was the end of it. I wanted to think that.

As my face grew more and more rigid, Kobayashi-san suddenly called out to me with a smile.

“By the way, I see you’ve been leaving all the big pieces of eggplant alone, don’t you like them? Or are you saving them to eat all at once?”

I don’t like them.

But, for some reason, I didn’t want to say it.

## **Baldur's Side**

Absence makes the heart grow fonder, just who was it that first said that?

When the summer break started and I could no longer see the girl that I met every day, I felt like I had lost something deeply important to me. Like an important part of my everyday life had been stripped away.

It made me happy just to lose myself thinking about her, but that only made remembering she wasn't by my side all the more painful. It was painful. I wanted to see her. I love her... After a while, I finally realized that's how I felt.

So, just why was that?

Ever since the beginning, I had thought she was a very cute girl.

I had always been interested in her the moment she entered the school. About what she went through to come here, about her incredible strength, and eventually, I found myself worrying about that girl who seemed unbelievably pretty and lively considering everything that happened.

After coming to be her escort, I learned even more about her power, her upright nature, her simple way of thinking and the noble warrior's heart she possessed, and eventually, I realized I liked those things about her as well.

But, it was only after I noticed just how much happiness seeped out of my life when I lost the opportunity to meet her every day that I realized those feelings were love.

I thought I was exaggerating, that I could easily console myself with thinking that I could meet her again once the holidays were over, but as the days wore on I realized that the thought of spending a full month without seeing her was unbearable.

Once I realized that, there was only one thing I could think of.

I love Miss Finne.

And in the same breath, I realized I had not the skill to extricate myself cleanly from the political marriage destined for my future.

So, my only choice was to bow my head in apology to my uncle and his daughters, and accept my expulsion from the Riefenstahl house. Oh, yes, I would need to inform my parents and brothers in advance as well. Assuming I lost my path to knighthood as well, should I put my sword arm to use as a bouncer, a mercenary or an adventurer? As I thought about my feelings and what I would do with myself in the future all through the summer holidays, I suddenly received news that Finne had been accepted as a daughter of the main family... I didn't understand at all.

Miss Finne was a descendant of the Riefenstahl house, and should have been the legitimate successor should her father have lived, so my uncle adopted her with the intention of having whoever married her inherit the title of Marquis.

If I wanted to regain my place as the successor to uncle's position, I was to successfully court Miss Finne.

When I received that information at the same time as the public announcement, I didn't really understand.

My uncle apologized to me, but I never really had much attachment to the position of the successor, and if the reason was to protect Miss Finne then I would never have any objections.

But... The point where it now seems that I am being told to approach Miss Finne, not for love's sake, but part of an expectation to lie for the sake of the family... I thought that was regrettable.

---

"You're not very honest..."

I do not want to hear that from you, Liselotte.

That's what I thought straight away, but since Liese would get annoyingly stubborn if I said that, I listened instead.

The summer break was over, and we were three days into the new semester.

'Why have you not courted my adorable little sister Finne yet?', were the first words of Liselotte's interrogation after she called me to the manor where she stayed when attending the academy. It was quite irritating to have Liese, who was perhaps the least honest girl with her feelings in the world, stare at me with such disgusted looking eyes.

I couldn't hold it in anymore and let out a sigh.

"I'm reluctant to tell her my real thoughts because she might think that it's just a lie... What if I lose her trust, and she won't even let me stand by her side as a guard anymore?"

"Incompetent buffoon."

Liese's curt insult cut straight through me.

As I looked down silently, Liselotte kept speaking disdainfully.

"You should be on your knees in front of her, crying and begging her to love you back. It was Finne who robbed you of your place as successor, after all, surely if you put on a pathetic enough display she will pity you enough to at least give you a chance."

"That's why I don't want to do something like that..."

Well, that was another problem.

Ever since returning from Riefenstahl Castle, Miss Finne seemed like she was worried about me.

It wasn't just my own pride at stake, I didn't want to corner her in such a way.

"Use whatever means are at your disposal. Strike down your enemies with force. To truly be a Riefenstahl, you must have at least a modicum of avarice."

Liselotte said that with a wicked and cold smile.

No, Liese, that's just your way, not Riefenstahl's.

In order to stay as His Highness the Crown Prince Siegward's fiancée, she has done and would do anything to protect that place.

"...Speaking of which, I never would have thought you would accept Miss Finne as your little sister, Liese."

Earlier in spring, I would have sooner expected Liselotte to instead have had her eliminated. That was part of the reason, being part of Liese's family, I was worried about the potential unfortunate victim, Finne.

Hearing me say that, Liselotte took a deep breath before she spoke again.

"I admit that, in the past, I may have expressed some jealousy over how well Finne and His Highness Prince Siegward were getting along. But I decided to accept her as a friend when she was a commoner and now she is also a daughter to a Marquis. It is not wrong to say that she could become the biggest threat to me, either"

But then, those eyes of hers that had sunk slightly towards the ground sparked right back up.

"However, I am his fiancée. With everything I've been taught, all the effort I've made, all the love I feel, I cannot lose. His Highness is also a sincere and intelligent person, so he will make a sound and rational judgement... and... choose..."

"...Don't cry."

Even though her words came across as strong, that single tear that dripped down her face betrayed her anxiety.

"I am not crying."

"If it's worrying you so much that you're going to cry about it, why did you not oppose it?"

Ignoring Liese's stubborn will, I pointed that out, but she just shook her head.

"I cannot take anything more away from Finne. That girl... For her to be hurt again, go hungry again, suffer sadness again, feel lonely again, and most of all, fear for her life again, I will *never* allow it."

Well, we're in agreement there.

Just as I was reflecting on what a good person she was, deep down, Liese suddenly looked up and glared at me.

"That's why, Bard, you should get on your knees right away, beg for her love and serve her all your life. With that underwhelming love of yours, you can at least be her shield."

"Returning here again...?"

"We have returned. Well... Methods of confession aside, my assertion that you love Finne, it wasn't wrong, was it Bard?"

Liselotte looked at me slightly uneasily.

Although it was for Miss Finne's sake as well, the only reason I let this conversation keep going was that I am convinced of my feelings.

If I said that I didn't love Miss Finne here and that I wasn't convinced to relinquish my position as successor, then there could be strife in the future.

If I didn't make it clear right now, I'm sure Liese wouldn't let me leave until she got it from me anyways.

"That's the truth. It was only after the summer break had begun that I realized but, I truly do love Miss Finne. Your view that I had always been looking her way as well was not wrong either."

When I finally admitted it, Liese breathed a sigh of relief.

"Of course, that's right, isn't it? On that note, Bard, there is something that I have to apologize for as well."

"...What's that?"

"I've been told that you've been seeing Finne off to the staff dormitory at the academy for the past three days now, but she doesn't currently live there anymore. My apologies."

As my cousin said that with an unusually full smile, I had a bad feeling.

"She has been carrying her luggage out of the dormitory, having her dinners in the dormitory and saying farewells to the staff and teachers there she was so indebted to, but in the evenings she has been coming back to live here together with me."

As Liselotte continued to brightly smile as she spoke, I stood up.

"The moving work had been going on until yesterday, but today she came back from the dormitories in the same carriage with me."

As Liselotte's words continued to snake into my ear, I was convinced that not only was Miss Finne in this house, but she was nearby... So close nearby that she heard this entire conversation, as I desperately looked around.

"...From tomorrow onwards, please use your house's carriage to drop her off at this house, if you would."

With her point made, Liselotte stood up and began to leave the room.

Her line of sight shifted for just an instant.

...There!

I threw open the doors of the walk-in closet with conviction. And there was Miss Finne, her face bright red.



Should I detest myself for letting my guard down and not noticing the signs? Should I admire or be angry with Liselotte, who used me as such an effective pawn to rid herself of one of her potential rivals?

I was lost for words, but Liselotte had already left the room, so there was nothing I could do.

Getting down on my hands and knees to beg like she suggested was only going to be a last resort.



For now, I took her hand and quietly lead her to the centre of the room, towards the sofa where Liese was sitting just a moment ago.

Letting her sit down, I lowered myself onto one knee and looked up at her, taking a deep breath.

I don't know exactly how you're supposed to express your love.

So, all I could do was just tell her how I honestly felt.

## **I Heard Something Strange (Finne's Side)**

I like Liselotte Onee-sama. I love her. Though maybe it would be an exaggeration to say that I'm *in love* with her, I think.

But, I still love and respect her anyway.

When I first met her, if I'm going to be honest, I was a little frightened of her.

Onee-sama is the ideal noblewoman, who never left a gap in her armour. As a commoner, that perfect blend of elegance, lineage, appearance and merit was actually a bit scary to come up against.

Also, those beautiful purple eyes that I have never seen anyone other than Onee-sama and Marquis Riefenstahl with, that mysterious shade of violet always looked so beautiful, so serious and so fierce. I was convinced I would always be afraid of them.

But one day, I noticed her gaze when she was watching over Prince Siegward, like a playful kitten watching a ball of yarn.

And after seeing that, as I thought back on everything I found scary whenever she confronted me, I realized she wasn't just tsun, there was a dere side to her as well.

Onee-sama was a truly good person, but the problem was that when she was nervous or embarrassed, her language suddenly got stubborn and harsh to try and hide that. Though, that was part of her cuteness.

She generously gave me a wand, uniforms, lecture notebooks, hair accessories, dresses and even helped me study.

When she found out I was related to her, she immediately accepted me into her family. She even made me her younger sister.

But for me, who felt like I had just been given the cutest Onee-sama in the world, I wanted to do something to return the favour as well.

"Hey, Finne? Could I ask something of you? There was something I was hoping you could do for me..."

So, the moment Onee-sama asked me, my mouth moved before even thinking.

"Yes! Anything you want, Onee-sama!"

As I forcefully answered her, Onee-sama smiled happily. It was a refined and elegant smile, but there was something sexy about it too. How lovely.

"Thank you. But, it isn't anything too difficult. However, it will require you to stay quiet and behave yourself for a while."

Instead of telling me what the reason was, she simply stood up and walked me over to the room's big walk-in closet.

As I stood next to her, I looked up slightly confused, but she gently stroked my head.

“You’re a good girl, right? Listen, Finne. No matter what happens from now on, you can’t make a sound, okay? Just be quiet and listen, can you do it?”

As she talked to me, I nodded repeatedly, intoxicated by her hand that ran through my hair.

I’ll be a good girl. I won’t talk. I won’t run rampant. I’ll behave myself. Definitely!

I didn’t know whether or not that determination was reflected well in my eyes or not.

But, as she looked at me, she nodded firmly as she closed the doors.

---

So, that’s how I got into this shameful situation.

Onee-sama had ensnared both myself and Bard-senpai.

Whilst Onee-sama had coaxed Bard-senpai into confessing that he loved me, I struggled with all my might to stay quiet like Onee-sama had told me too in the closet.

“Please believe me, Miss Finne. I truly do love you, with all my heart. When you aren’t by my side, there’s no colour in the world. When you aren’t standing next to me, the world loses its lustre. When I can’t see your smile, this world doesn’t feel worth living in. That’s what I feel in my heart. I love you. But these words, are they even enough to express what’s raging inside of me?”

And now, Bard-senpai was attacking me directly.

Please stop.

“Wait, wait, just wait a minute...”

As I barely managed to squeak a voice out, Bard-senpai finally fell silent.

Suddenly being pulled out of the closet like that, should I apologize for eavesdropping? Or should I pretend I didn’t hear anything? Even though I was still confused and didn’t even know what to say, Bard-senpai had suddenly opened up with a barrage of passionate feelings like that.

That he didn’t care about inheriting the House, that he truly only loved me, he told me that directly.

You... Aren’t you usually the stoic kind of character!?

I was so frustrated I wanted to blurt that out. As I faced his onslaught of feelings, I felt like I was in a battle.

Should I kill him? If I didn’t, would I die from embarrassment first?

“Bard-senpai, do you just not have any idea of the meaning of shame...? How can you just say things like that so easily...?”

When I finally let that spill out, Bard-senpai just looked slightly confused as he asked me back.

“Because if we’ve already come this far, what’s the point of being ashamed anymore? Of course, I’m nervous, but how should I put it, it’s like the excitement of being in a difficult battle? In a desperate situation, wouldn’t you agree that the best thing to do is to throw away your defenses and focus on the attack?”

Ah, right, this guy was a battle junkie.

Whilst I’m also the type that burns brightest in a pinch, I didn’t exactly think of applying something like that outside of a battle, and especially not in a situation like this. But, well, maybe it could work in theory?

“This truly is such a desperate situation for me, Miss Finne, because I really do love you. I’m begging you, please let me stand by your side.”

So, as Bard-senpai kept my other hand in his, I clutched at my forehead with my other.

Even if you say that...

Even if you beg like that...

“I... I’m still a little confused. I don’t dislike you at all, Bard-senpai. Actually, um, right... I like you, I think.”

Although my voice trailed off towards the end, as I somehow managed to get it out, Bard-senpai’s face suddenly lit up. Uh oh. There’s so much hope in those eyes.

“But! Something like marriage or engagement, right now it’s absolutely impossible!”

When I told him that in a panic, Bard-senpai nodded calmly. Wait, he understands...?

“I... I’ve always lived as a commoner until now. To us, marriage is something you go through with a person you’ve loved for years... Ha... But even if there are some people who don’t go through with it, their relationship still reaches a point where they feel safe living together with each other first, then maybe after that, um, they think about...”

As I spoke uneasily, Bard-senpai slowly nodded on every syllable.

“That would make sense. I wouldn’t ask you to throw away your own common sense, either. Even if I was ordered to marry someone else for the sake of the house other than Miss Finne, I’d flee into the mountains. But, if you truly don’t hate me, then I would like to propose marrying using your idea.”

That was how he replied.

No, but, there’s no way anyone would normally accept a proposal in a crazy situation like this? Besides, if I accept, Marquis Riefenstahl would be so over the moon that I don’t think I’d ever be able to break up with him without breaking his heart as well...? But, it’s not like I really hate the idea of having a relationship though...!

As I fretted on the spot, Bard-senpai just silently looked straight at me.

Ahh, I get it, it’s all up to my decision, then?

I hate this. It's too hard.

Ahh, jeez, someone, anyone, help me!

Help me, somebody... Help me, Gods...!!

『Ahh... if only they could hear us...』

『We're just outfielders if Sieg isn't here, huh...? Seriously, if only they could hear us. These two are way too serious...』

Suddenly, I could hear the 【Voices】 of a man and a woman.

Eh? What? Who? Where?

...Above us?

『I guess the protection I gave Baru is working well, if we can see his actions like this...』

I heard the man's voice again. Yeah, he's definitely above me. But, when I looked up, all I could see was the ceiling.

『It'd be nice if they could get along even without us...』

『Right? Well, even if worst comes to worst, Finne can go rely on Aru at the church for help, or go down the commoner route and maybe become adventurers with Baru, right? Even if they don't become Marquis and Marquise, they can still get married, it'd just be a little more normal...』

“Hey, stop, just... wait a minute.”

Not being able to silently listen to the voices of those two anymore, I raised my voice.

『Oh?』

『What's this?』

The voices from above suddenly stopped.

Bard-senpai looked at me like I was crazy.

He wasn't looking up at all.

“Um, those two voices from a while ago, don't tell me... I'm the only one who heard them?”

I asked Bard-senpai just in case, but he still just stared at me strangely.

“Two... voices?”

“You know, the man and the woman... Huh? Wait, wasn't this what Prince Siegward was talking about...? The Voice of God thing...?”

As I talked, I suddenly realized the possibility and couldn't stop myself saying it.

『OHOOH, IT'S FINALLY HAPPENED, FINNE HAS AWOKEEEEEEN!?!』

『Has she really awoken!? Finne-chan, if you can hear us, give us a signal! Just give us a wink!』

...Wink.

“What the...? Cute.”

It seemed like that wink, that I was trying to signal the supposed Gods with, actually had an effect on Bard-senpai as well.

I heard something strange from Bard-senpai’s mouth again.

『She can really hear us! I’m Endo, the Play-By-Play Commentator!』

『I’m Kobayashi, the Colour Commentator! You don’t need to reply to us, just listen to our voices!』

“Why did you do something so cute...? If you do something like that, you’re only going to make me love you more... Why...? I feel like I should hunt down a dragon...?”

The great 【The Play-By-Play Endo】 and 【Colour Commentator Kobayashi】! No doubt about it, these were the two Gods the Crown Prince was talking about!

Even though I was convinced by that, the first thing I had to do was stop Bard-senpai, who was slowly spinning out of control. Why was this guy so restless?

“No, please stop. There’s no point in doing something so dangerous.”

After soothing him down a little, Bard-senpai, who had shot up to his feet before, knelt back down to look at me again.

『That’s right, don’t worry about us! Do your best to talk to Baldur, Finne!』

『It doesn’t seem as if Baldur truly cares at all about the succession. How about confirming that with him first?』

It’s true that Bard-senpai had said something like that a couple of times. Receiving support from the voices of the Gods, I spoke.

“Bard-senpai... What if I... If I told you that I was afraid of becoming the Marquise, what would you do?”

“Then, we can escape from this country together. Fortunately, both you and I are skilled warriors. We can live wherever we want.”

The part that I was most uneasy about was paved over so simply.

There was something so honest in Bard-senpai’s words that I wanted to cry.

“...Bard-senpai, is that really fine?”

Even if he thought it was okay and I was happy with it, I couldn’t let Bard-senpai overdo it.

As I asked him that fearfully, once again he answered so simply.

“When I believed that you were still a commoner, I was prepared to abandon the name of Riefenstahl for your sake. I would never want to put you through any hardships, Miss Finne, but if the House you

succeed isn't comfortable for you, then it's worthless. So long as Miss Finne can smile, then I am happy."

"...Don't you think it's unfair, being able to say something like that with a straight face?"

"It's only because I'm so desperate."

Desperate? Really?

From how calmly he was telling me all this, I wanted to tell him it definitely didn't sound like it. But, somehow, those words let me relax a little bit.

"Is that so? Then... that's fine."

As I got pulled into this absurd atmosphere, I said that with a sigh.

Oh, damn it, I don't think he got it.

Bard-senpai still looked confused.

"For the time being, let's put all the marriage talk aside and just get along for now, okay? About being together with me, I accept."

As I felt a weight fall off my shoulders as I laughed, for some reason only after all that did the knight in front of me blush.

## 【Strategy Meeting】

In the end, we couldn't finish the game before the end of the summer holidays, so even after the new term began both at school and at Kobayashi-san's house, we would still be aiming at the 【Greatest Happy Ending】.

Today was the first day after the beginning of the summer semester. "Let's have a strategy meeting!" Kobayashi-san suddenly declared as we were eating our convenience store bought lunches at her place, since classes were only on for a half day.

【The Grand Council of the Gods Who Hold the Fate of Another World in their Hands】 she may have called it, but I still thought it was a pretty cool name for what was basically just two high school students having a chat over lunch.

"Now then, the time in the world of the game is about to move into autumn, so if the event with the Ancient Witch happens at the autumn festival just like in the game, then we need to take this time to build up the forces backing up Finne, right?"

Kobayashi-san said that with a surprisingly serious look all of a sudden.

But, she was right. At the end of autumn, during the festival, the monster will be resurrected. Even if we can get rid of the risk that Liselotte will become possessed by it and transform, we have to be ready for anything.

"Our best bet would be to get the remaining two capture targets on our side, then we would have the same strength as the reverse harem from the game so it should be an easy win... But, saying that..."

Taking the chocolate pudding off the desk, Kobayashi said that with a difficult expression.

"Some kind of problem?"

"Yeah, I mean, going by the game those two had to be aggressively pursued to capture them, it's not as if they would be interested in Finne from the start, right?"

Kobayashi pressed her hand against her cheek as she mulled the words over.

"The last two are the oldest and youngest characters, there are the older teacher Leon-sensei and the shota character Fabian Ortenburg, the son of a viscount... or Fabian-kun, but... Fabian-kyun is still just a child and he's pretty innocent in his route, so it might not be too hard to have him lend the party a hand, but Leon... well..."

Since my only real memories were of the reverse harem route, the main thing I remembered about these two guys were how they fought. Fabian was the glass cannon type, with low defense but high magical power, with all sorts of loud and flashy attacks. Leon, meanwhile, uses a lot of status magic like paralysis, sleep and poison, as well as direct stat debuffs like lowering enemy defense. They would both be invaluable in battle.

"Is Leon really that troublesome of a guy?"

I was always a little wary of him, since he definitely seemed like the always smiling but secretly two-faced type, but I never got the impression he was such a bad guy he'd abandon a student in need.



Wouldn't it be fine to try and ask him for help? Seeing the confused look on my face, Kobayashi-san sighed before continuing.

"Leon-sensei, how should I put it, he's the kind of character who likes to hide his true nature. He was the son of a mistress who was separated from his mother by his father, who sought an heir, but once his real wife gave birth to a true son, he was cast aside. So, in order to avoid the dangerous world of politics and high society, he withdrew from the path that had been set up for him to become a high ranking court mage to become a teacher instead. That was strange enough for such a talented person... In other words, Leon-sensei is trying to hide his true power in order to avoid attention from his old house and high society in general... In order to convince him to do otherwise, there'd have to be something drastic, like, say, falling in love with Finne-chan..."

"Well, that's not gonna happen now, huh...?"

Since Baldur and Finne were going together so well now, Finne wasn't exactly going to try and tempt another man and we definitely didn't want to force her to either.

In the first place, Leon supposedly wasn't the kind of person to pursue a romance with a girl who is engaged, or at least is seemingly going to be engaged, with a person that she loves.

"So, what I'm saying is it will be hard to get absolutely everyone on side...?"

Kobayashi-san rested her elbows on the desk as her chin sank into her hands sadly.

"But, the Ancient Witch, I think it's sort of a demon, right?"

I decided to double check on something that has been bothering me for a little while.

"I guess?"

Kobayashi-san didn't seem to have much motivation as she began to slowly eat her pudding.

"If the witch is left alone then, she might not just destroy the country but the entire world, right?"

"That was one of the bad ends, yeah."

"...Then, why is something so important only left to students to deal with?"

Kobayashi-san looked like she hadn't ever considered it before as I finally let the question on my mind out.

"That's right... If you really think about it, isn't it strange that children are the ones left to solve a national crisis like that!?"

Realizing what I mean, Kobayashi-san suddenly shouted that after jumping up from the desk.

Right. It was fine if it was just a game, but if this was a reality now, then this was the kind of thing that the adults in charge of the country should be confronting with their full strength before it became a grave situation.

Well, Leon-sensei is an adult, but he's still only twenty-four years old, so basically, the party assembled to fight the final battle was made up of only young people. I don't think there would be any government or military that would actually order something like that, so it seems a bit strange.

"Thinking about it normally, wouldn't they have other people deal with it? Like the police or the knights? Or why not the whole army? In any case, the adults in power should be the ones to fight, right?"

As a story for a game, it was beautiful to see teenagers overcoming an apocalyptic evil with their own power, but it didn't really make any sense realistically. It was impossible, even. It could never be allowed to happen.

Thinking about what I said, Kobayashi-san kept nodding over and over again.

"Right... That's right... Actually, since it's Liselotte and Finne who are in danger, shouldn't their father be the one to intervene...?"

Kobayashi-san looked deadly serious.

"Liselotte and Finne's father, or rather, the most important general in the country with all of his men. If we can get them to help, wouldn't that be far more helpful than a single Leon-sensei, no matter how strong he might be? Finne seems much stronger right now than in the reverse harem route as well."

Definitely, when it came to mental and physical strength, all the main characters actually seem quite reliable right now.

Finne was a crazy gorilla, Baldur was training even harder to keep up with that Gorilla Finne and the Crown Prince had already asked for Baldur's help earlier. It seems like Liselotte has been happily training alongside Finne ever since they came to live together and Art, who looks like he has been browbeaten into becoming one of Liselotte's followers, has been learning how to become an Acolyte of the Punch just like Finne. They can definitely win.

Kobayashi-san, following my train of thought, slowly began to smile.

"Alright then, let's give up on Leon-sensei! Our immediate strategy is to get Rizepapa to participate in the fight against the witch, and also invite Fabian-kyun into the party!"

So, that's our plan. As I nodded to agree with the strategy, Kobayashi-san suddenly looked as if she realized something.

"But, for this, who are we going to have do it...?"

The two people who can currently hear our voices were Siegward and Finne. The person we would have to ask to do it would be one or the other.

"We should have Finne ask General Riefenstahl for help, right? That old man, when it comes to his new daughter... Since she's the **【Lovely Daughter of My Beloved Older Brother】** to him, he loves talking to her every chance he can get. Besides, he'd be more motivated to do something for a cute girl than for Siegward, anyways."

As I suggested that, Kobayashi-san nodded along.

“I think you’re right? Then, when it comes to Fabian-kyun, we should ask Sieghard, I guess?”

I think that’s fine.

We can take advantage of the Crown Prince’s influence to make an invitation he can’t refuse.

So, I nodded again.

“Alright then, let’s get this strategy going straight away!”

Whilst uttering a quick apology to Leon-sensei in my head, I stood up as Kobayashi-san jumped up from the table excitedly.

Sorry, Leon-sensei. With just one meeting, we smashed your opportunity to show off and fall in love with a pretty girl.

Well, then again, maybe Leon-sensei shouldn’t really be falling in love with a fifteen year old Finne in the first place, that lolicon...

## An Enemy Here Too?

So, there was an enemy rival here as well...!

Despite diligently following the directions of the Gods and making contact with Fabian Ortenburg, I'm feeling more irritated than I have ever felt in my entire life.

Yes, even in such a place, there was another enemy.

"Liselotte Onee-chanBig sis, what should I do if I get attacked by ice?"

"Well, let's see, ice attacks don't just change the temperature in the air, but also inflict a physical ailment also..."

As I watched my fiancée Liselotte and the young prodigy Fabian Ortenburg excitedly discuss a hypothetical magical battle with each other, I felt a strange sense of alienation in my gut.

『What's thiiiiis!? Unexpectedly, it seems like these two are very compatible with one anotheeeeeer!?!』

Even the great God Endow is shocked.

『Thinking about it, maybe Liselotte, the greatest older sister of all time and the cute young Fabian-kun were actually a perfect fit...?』

Since Liselotte's mother was more of a free spirit, she had to take on a lot of the work at home so had developed a strong sense of responsibility and duty. It may be that, seeing the young Fabian Ortenburg who has had to go through a lot of hardships despite unfitting for his age, she was filled with a sense of wanting to take of him?

No, well, considering how much she fawns over Finne, she might just be weak to younger people in general. That said, Liselotte and Finne were technically in the same grade and Liselotte was only the older sister because she was born some months before her, although Finne does have that quality that makes you think of her as 'cute'.

I heard Liselotte mutter that word more than a few times in Finne's company.

I see, so that's it...? Liselotte is just weak against anything she thinks is 【Cute】...?

The boy sitting in front of her, who always looked up at my fiancée with those big upturned eyes certainly did seem to have that quality. No matter how much I tried, I don't think I could be cute like that. No, perhaps when I had only just met her, maybe then I would have been adorable...?

It's no use. I can't think straight. For some reason, my thoughts are going to a strange place.

As I was busy fighting against the strange thoughts flooding my mind, those two looked like they were getting along even more.



It seemed like my plan to use Liselotte to help Fabian Ortenburg open up was a great success, but in another way, it was an almighty failure.

Remembering back, just how had it come to this in the first place?

---

Fabian Ortenburg was a child prodigy.

That was something that everyone on the royal capital could plainly see.

He was only eleven years old, still too young to clear the minimum age requirement to attend the academy.

For young children of common birth, they would receive a basic education either from the church or the state depending on where they lived, whilst for the young children of the nobility, they would be tutored at home in whichever subjects their parents pleased, such as the martial focused schooling favoured at the Riefenstahl home intended to induce a sense of self-discipline.

But, because of his genius, he was permitted to attend the school despite his age as an exceptional case. In fact, considering just how dangerous the magical power he possesses is for his young age, the academy was instructed by the state to focus on teaching him to control that power of his.

Even though he was still developing as a mage even now, if he got serious he could probably reduce an entire town to cinders.

Despite that immense magical ability, though, his physical ability is about as weak as one would expect from a young child.

To put it bluntly, considering his vast potential, a viscount house was woefully inadequate to protect him alone.

His father was given the title of a Court Mage, and is working in tandem with both the Academy and the state in order to protect him. Him, being Fabian Ortenburg.

『That's why, we were hoping Sieg could ask Fabian-kyun to help out during the battle against the Ancient Witch.』

The Goddess Coebayashay interjected as I was talking to Liselotte one day, but the thing that struck me the most was the name **【Fabian-kyun】**.

I did take notice when she started calling Liselotte that strange name 'Rize-tan', but Coebayashay's naming sense certainly is... unique?

Treating an 11-year-old boy genius who was an unparalleled genius magus with such a cute-sounded nickname, as expected of a Goddess. Well, it's true that he does look quite adorable.

With glossy and long raven-like hair that came down to his shoulders and blue gem-like eyes that shone like sapphires, it was difficult to discern his gender at a glance. In fact, one might be expected to think he was a lovely young girl at a first meeting. It wasn't just his ability that meant he had to be guarded tightly since there had already been several attempts by perverted noblemen from other countries to steal him away.

Well, of course, there were a number of people who tried to abduct him for his abilities as well. There was no shortage of people scheming to brainwash him whilst he was young for all sorts of evil purposes.

“...Ah.”

My voice came out involuntarily as I realized a problem in fulfilling the Goddess' request.

After numerous abduction and kidnapping attempts, some of which very nearly succeeded, Fabian Ortenburg had developed a fear of tall, adult men.

I wasn't yet recognized as an adult since I was still enrolled in the academy, but I did recently just turn eighteen. Right now, I look like an adult.

If it were me, he might not want to listen to what I have to say.

"Is something the matter?"

Liselotte looked up at me worriedly, as I trailed off in the middle of our conversation.

"Ah... Right, sometime soon I'll have to greet Fabian Ortenburg, but I just remembered that he isn't good around tall adult men, so..."

Leaving aside the fact that this was a duty ordained by the Gods, I told her all the rest.

Then, after only looking to think about it for a moment, Liselotte's face brightened as she proposed an idea.

"If that's the case, then perhaps I shall act as His Highness' substitute."

As she said that with a haughty smile, I realized that although as my fiancée there wasn't anyone more suited to act in my stead, she could be quite easily misunderstood like this.

Actually, wouldn't Fabian be afraid of her too...?

As I thought something rather impolite, Liselotte must have noticed on my face as she got angry.

"No matter what you may think of me, I do have four younger sisters, I will have you know? I virtually raised three of them, so I am quite good at looking after small children."

She calmly told me those words as if they were the inscrutable truth. I suppose she's not wrong?

"Then... I will leave it in your care."

With those words, that proud looking smile returned to Liselotte's lips.

"You're gentle and kind, I'm sure that you'll become an excellent mother one day."

『Uh oh, the Crown Prince is going in for the kiiillll!』

『Even though he said that to his fiancée, I feel like there was a little bit more to that line than merely stating fact. Indeed, there was a hint of sexual harassment in it as well.』

But as Liselotte went completely stiff and bright red, I didn't pay much attention to the words of the Gods.

Honestly, I just told her what I felt in my heart.

"W-what ridiculous things are you saying!? O-of course I would love my child dearly, but it's still too early to... No, wait, there has been a trend of marriage amongst students lately, but His Highness still hasn't graduated... N-no, I can't!"

『Ah, it isn't sexual harassment at all, is it? It seems like Rize-tan is fine with it, so it's O.K.』

As Liselotte flailed her arms around and Coebayashay sounded happy, I barely managed to suppress the grin I felt tugging at the ends of my mouth.

Ahh... cute. Yeah, depending on the circumstances it was possible to marry before both parties were legally adults, depending on things such as age difference, wasn't it? Once I graduate, I wonder if it would be possible to push forward my marriage date...

“Ahhh! Jeez!! Enough thinking about this foolishness, I'll be going at once!!”

Liselotte interrupted my thoughts that were once again wandering someplace strange as she stood up bolt straight suddenly with a shout, and made for the door. It seemed like she was going to go and look for Fabian straight away.

When I tried to chase after her, she suddenly came to a stop.

Turning around on her heel, she looked at me hesitantly before she opened her mouth again.

“...I will make sure to live up to His Highness' expectations.”

Having said that, she once again turned around and walked away, showing me an unassailable back.

Were those words about making the acquaintance of Fabian Ortenburg... or about a future child we may have together? I realized that was a question not even I could ever ask her, so I merely shut my mouth and jogged to catch up to her.

---

After that, well, it didn't take too long for Liselotte to become fast friends with Fabian Ortenburg. On the contrary, if anything, they're *too* friendly.

In the meantime, she started to just call him 'Fabian' and he called her 'Liese Onee-chan', with all manner of polite speech and titles disappearing between them. How could this have happened?

『Yikes, Sieg has an expression that I've never seen on his face before...!』

The venerable Endow's voice trembled. Was he making fun of me?

Certainly, I'm all too aware of how awful my face must look right now. Finne is a girl, she is treated like a sister and they do have a blood relation. However, Fabian Ortenburg is none of these things. The sense of crisis looming over me felt altogether different this time. My expression really must be like nothing I've ever worn before.

He may be still a child, but I can't help what I dislike.

『No, I think Sieg should be okay? For now, at least. But, in ten years, who knows...?』

Coebayashay said that with a little laugh.



In ten years, Liselotte would be 25 or 26 years old. Fabian would be 21. Ah, no, no good at all.

“Liselotte.”

Finally unable to bear the frustration anymore, I called out to her.

“What can I do for you, Your Highness?”

Either she’s pretending not to notice my impatience or she really didn’t sense it, as she cocked her head to the side. Fabian looking up at me with those big innocent eyes of his only made me feel more frustrated.

“No, it’s nothing, I just noticed that the two of you seem to have gotten quite lively. What exactly were you discussing?”

Trying to swallow down the feelings raging in my gut, I asked Liselotte that with a smile.

“We were discussing my younger sisters. I am older than my twin sisters, but only by one year. My youngest sister is two. Considering their age, doesn’t His Highness agree that they would be perfect as fiancée candidates for Fabian?”

“No, a young lady from a Marquis house is too good for someone like me...”

“My sisters don’t act like young ladies at all, so I am sure you will be fine.”

Please don’t say that about your own family.

But for some reason, Fabian breathed a sigh of relief at Liselotte’s words.

As he did, Liselotte quickly sidled up and whispered softly in my ear.

“In regards to my younger sisters, I am sure that they can act as excellent guards for him. In fact, other than my sisters, there is no one truly suited to stand next to him, is there?”

It was as she said. A young lady who would be willing to associate with someone who was so often the target of kidnapping would be a rare existence indeed. Whilst the daughters of other houses may have issues either politically or when it came to their ability to defend themselves, there wouldn’t be any issues like that with the Riefenstahl house.

Her sisters’ positions were once up in the air due to their potential engagement to Baldur, but because of how that’s progressed they were completely free now.

“You’re right. I also think that it’s a good idea.”

When I smiled, Liselotte blushed hard for some strange reason as she slowly edged backwards.

『She just realized how close she was to Sieg, so she’s embarrassed, isn’t she?』

Oh, so that’s what it was? Having once more confirmed that my fiancée was impossibly cute with the Goddess’ words, I quickly ran over the idea in my head of turning Fabian into a future brother-in-law, rather than a future rival.

“...Then, Liese Onee-chan would become my real big sister?”

Fabian Ortenburg tilted his head to the side as he looked up at Liselotte with those big eyes. How cunningly cute.

“That’s right. That would be such a wonderful thing, don’t you think?”

As the two of them smiled at each other, Liselotte and Fabian Ortenburg looked like the perfect big sister and little brother. But, as I watched, I realized that they were way too close. I’m not sure my mental health can take this, perhaps I should have him marry some other Lord’s daughter, not one of the young ladies of the House of Riefenstahl?

『If he’s going to make a face like that, why doesn’t he just finally tell Liselotte how he feels...?』

Endow’s words cut straight through me, as if he was disgusted with what I was feeling.

I know. Despite being in the position of her fiancée, I’m constantly keeping up this narrow-minded jealousy without letting her know my true thoughts. Even I realize that.

『No, if Rize-tan is pursued too aggressively, she wouldn’t be able to handle the embarrassment of it. Just like before, she might faint again.』

The calm and gentle words of Coebayashay made sense.

That being said...

“Well... By the end of autumn, I want to catch her.”

Before the witch interferes between us in autumn, I want to take Liselotte in my arms. I will never let her be taken away from me. Filled with determination, I muttered that vow to myself.

Liselotte is mine. I won’t give her up to anyone.

As I realized the dark and selfish greed that was spreading through me, I watched the peaceful scene of that young boy and my fiancée happily chatting with that same old smile on my face.

## Cuteness = Greatness

『There's no father that can refuse the request of their adorable daughter after all, so I'm sure it'll be okay! Plus, this is the kind of work a general is supposed to do anyway!』

『In the first place, the person most in danger is his beloved daughter, Liselotte. Even from my knowledge of the game, he was a very affectionate person, so there's no reason to be worried.』

The Gods Endo and Kobayashi were trying to pump up and encourage me, but I couldn't stop quivering. In the first place, were they really Gods? When I hear the voices of these two they talk to me like I'm just one of their friends...

“Are you alright, Finne?”

Bard-senpai, who stared anxiously at my face, didn't seem to be fretting about this situation as much as I was.

To meet with Marquis Riefenstahl today in the royal palace, I asked Bard-senpai to take me to his office since he often came here as a knight apprentice.

“I think I'm okay. Maybe. I know that I shouldn't be scared. But even so, meeting with a real nobleman, especially a big general, it's hard not to be nervous...”

Right, I couldn't help but be tense about this. As we kept walking down that long corridor, I took a deep breath.

Since the Marquis spent almost all of his time at the palace even if he did come home after work, which wasn't so often, it was always late at night. Bard-senpai told me that the Marquis preferred to do all of his work here since it was more convenient than working from his office at home, so I came here to talk with him.

But the hallways leading to his office in the palace was so long and glittery that I was regretting not just staying up late to see him at home.

“Don't worry. My Lord Uncle is always sweet on children.”

I felt a little disturbed by the words he spoke with such a serious face as he walked next to me.

Children? Well, of course, that makes sense if you compared me to Liselotte Onee-sama, but despite that, I was still at the age where I should be considered a bit more grown up. I was going to be making my social debut soon as well.

Seeing my annoyed pout, Bard-senpai hurriedly continued.

“Ah, no, I mean, I'd never say this to Liselotte, but everyone in the Riefenstahl family are weak to anything small and cute. How should I put this... everyone in the family is tall and well-built, so for them, everyday life is suffering. So when someone perfectly adorable and cute like Finne comes into their life, they'll obsess over you so much that they won't even be able to stay calm around you. Just by watching Liese, I'm sure you know what I mean?”

Even if he said that, I didn't say a word. I was too focused on trying not to tear the hem of my dress by stepping on it.

By the way, just what was he saying with such a serious voice...!?

『I sort of had this feeling before, but this guy really doesn't have a filter at all...!?!』

『As expected of Baldur, he's not the type to mince words.』

It seems even the Gods were surprised. Why was Liselotte Onee-sama so shy and Bard-senpai so shameless? I wonder if it would be better to add both of them together and then divide them by two.

“In other words, it'll be okay Finne, because you're cute..”

As Bard-senpai told me that confidently, we finally arrived in front of the Marquis' office.

Ahh, jeez! As much as I wanted to yell at Bard-senpai to shut up, I couldn't say anything considering where we were. Thanks to him, I'd lost all the tension in my heart I'd been feeling making my way here, replaced by another weird throbbing instead.

Well, I guess it's true that I'm small and childish...

Alright, let's do it! Relaxing my shoulders, I got ready to open up the big double doors in front of me...

But, still feeling a little fidgety for a new reason, I decided to ask for one selfish thing.

“...Hand.”

As I held out my hand and muttered that, Bard-senpai just stared at it dumbly.

I'll have to ask Onee-sama how to elegantly ask for an escort next time. For now, though, I'll have to do it the commoner's way.

“Hand. Give me it, please. It won't be as scary if you do that.”

When I looked up at Bard-senpai, it seemed like he finally understood, as a slight blush spread across his cheeks.

---

“Please excuse us.”

Following Bard-senpai, who called out and bowed, I silently curtsied with my hand in his, then stepped into the room.

Ahh, the carpet is really thick. I almost tripped on my heels. I'm glad I had him hold my hand.

The Marquis, who looked troubled as he was faced by a mountain of documents, put aside his quill as he raised his face to look at visitors.

“Oh? ...Ohhh!?”

For some reason, as soon as he saw us, he raised a surprised voice.

We did make an appointment in advance, and I'm fairly sure that we spoke to one of his subordinates who should have announced we were coming. What is he so surprised about?

"Is there something the matter, Your Excellency?"

Bard-senpai asked that Marquis in my place. Even if they were uncle and nephew by blood, he was still a Marquis and a general, so I guess he still showed him a lot of respect.

"Um, ummm, no, it's just, uh... Then this is about that, then...?"

The Marquis' eyes were firmly fixed on our joined hands as he said that.

About 'that'...? ...Ah.

Bard-senpai still looked confused, but the moment I understood I quickly pulled my hand away from his.

You're wrong! We didn't come to tell you that we're getting married, okay!?

"Um, that's not it! This is my first time coming to the royal palace, so I was just a little nervous, and uh, we're not here to talk about marriage or anything like that!!"

"Oh... I see, then...?"

As I panicked trying to explain myself, the Marquis didn't even try to hide his disappointment.

"Well, I will continue to exert my best efforts so that one day we are here to deliver such a report to you."

What the hell are you saying!?

I glared daggers at Bard-senpai who delivered that report like a proper soldier, but he just smiled at me.

Ahhh, you really are already making an effort, aren't you!?

"Is that so? Make sure to return with your shield or on it, then."

"You needn't even command me, Your Excellency."

With deeply serious voices, the uncle and nephew, or rather the general and the knight apprentice, exchanged words.

"...Then, what was the reason that you came, Miss Finne? Are you facing some sort of inconvenience at home?"

As I was growing rigid with embarrassment, the Marquis turned to ask me that kindly.

"Inconveniences... That could never be true! Onee-sama is always looking after me, in fact, I'm worried that she's the one being inconvenienced by me instead! And also, about my mama... I mean, mother, truly thank you very much for allowing her to live with me as well!!"

"I see, then I'm glad," the Marquis said with a smile as I bowed in a panic.

That's right, adopting me and even taking care of my mother, I really am indebted to the Riefenstahl family. I really did wonder if everything would be okay at first, but neither of us has been inconvenienced at all. Well, apart from being a little nervous at times. But even when it comes to that, I'm getting better.

"Umm... What I wanted to talk about today was, um, it was about Onee-sama."

As soon as I said that last word, the Marquis' gentle smile turned sharp and deadly. I could feel the atmosphere around us change.

Prince Siegward and I had both received a prophecy.

According to it, Onee-sama will be targeted by a villain known as the Ancient Witch.

Part of the proof of that are the nightmares that Liselotte Onee-sama has been having lately.

According to the Gods, apparently Onee-sama should be strong enough to not be taken over by it on herself, but it may still be necessary to protect her as well.

The time that the Ancient Witch is supposed to revive and attempt to possess Onee-sama was at the end of autumn. On the final day of the Thanksgiving Festival, which is a celebration for both the school and the whole country, dedicated to the Goddess Lilena. Before then, it's important to make sure that there are people at the school just in case the witch really does come to life.

Prince Siegward is still going to make a formal request to rally the forces of the country, but I wanted to talk to Liselotte Onee-sama's father the Marquis first.

Even though I still hadn't really learned how to speak formally, I still have to do my best to try and convince the Marquis with my own words, no matter how clumsy they are.

"I... I want to protect Onee-sama. Somehow, your strength, can you please lend it to us?"

At the end of it, I lowered my head.

"Hm," he mused as he heard my words, stepping forward. Was he thinking of some sort of compromise? Or was he going to flat out refuse?

"Consider it done. I swear that, with all the power that I have at my disposal, I shall protect both you and Liese as best I can."

With a kind voice, he gave my head a light stroke.

Quickly raising my head, I thanked the Marquis.

"T-Thank you very much!"

『Now go for the critical hit, Finne! Call him 'father'!!』

"Thank you... Fa... Father!"

Hearing the word of God, I blurted that out.

“Ehehe...” I couldn’t hold back my smile. Even though he had adopted me as his daughter, I was worried about how much respect I should show him, so I hadn’t called him ‘father’ yet. So, being able to finally say it was a relief.

“Baldur.”

“Yes, sir.”

The Marquis, whose face looked positively terrifying all of a sudden, called Baldur over with a serious voice.

Even though he was called out so suddenly, Bard-senpai snapped to attention straight away, waiting to receive the Marquis’ orders.

“What we discussed earlier, I’ve decided that it really is no good after all.”

“...What?”

Baldur and I reacted at the same time. Why was it suddenly no good now!?

As Baldur looked puzzled, I could feel an overwhelming war-like atmosphere pouring out of the Marquis.

“If you want to take this child away, you’ll have to defeat me first...!!”

What the hell is this person saying?

I thought that he was joking, but the Marquis looked dead serious as he took a stance and gripped the sword on his waist. Stop that. You’re destroying your dignity as a warrior.

“Your Excellency, please consider your surroundings. This isn’t the place to draw a sword.”

“Silence! I refuse to accept it! I can’t bear to see this child married away! In place of my brother, I shall protect her...!!”

Bard-senpai tried to calm the situation down, but some sort of strange switch had been flipped inside the Marquis and he wasn’t listening at all.

“Do you think I can accept such outrageous words...”

At the same time, Bard-senpai spat out an angry sigh and also lowered himself into a stance, his hand gripping his sword hilt.

...Eh?

“Well, if there’s anyone who dares stand between myself and marrying Finne, I’ll cut them down, even if its Your Excellency. I have no intention of ever giving up on her.”

There were now two warriors who were completely throwing away their dignity and pride in front of me.

As Bard-senpai and the Marquis kept spouting off ridiculous lines at each other, they sized each other up, waiting for the perfect opportunity to strike.

Wai... I... Huh... Um... What... What should I do!? Won't they tear up the royal palace at this rate!?





Ah, this is bad.

I have to do something.

Just as I felt they were about to draw their swords, I...

“Guh...!”

Kicked the Marquis hard in the shin.

Then, taking advantage of that momentum, I bounced forward one step and spun around.

“Gah...!?”

And delivered a hard uppercut to Bard-senpai’s chin.

Having their duel interrupted by a third party, the two of them looked at me in a daze. Their hands fell from their swords as well. Good.

“When I marry and who I marry, I’m the one who’ll decide! Got that!?”

I shouted at them at the top of my lungs. Faced with that, the two men nodded sheepishly. At the very least, it seems like they understand.

But, when I caught Bard-senpai’s eyes, it seemed like he was enchanted by something as he looked at me... No, I must have rattled his brain with that uppercut, he must just be on the verge of tears... I think?

## **A Strong Person (Finne's Side)**

“Honestly, you’re amazing. I was stunned by just how quickly you kicked His Excellency, and before I could even understand what was happening, the next thing I felt was the pain. Not even Liese could have pulled off such an excellent move. It was really so amazing...”

I thought wrong.

After we left the Marquis’ office and making our way through the vast maze of a royal palace, without anything else bad happening (apparently no one noticed I attacked both the general and a knight’s apprentice) we managed to reach the carriage, and I finally felt a sense of relief wash over me.

That was when Bard-senpai began to excitedly praise my punch.

“Well, thanks.”

Even if he tells me that I was more excellent than my dear Liselotte Onee-sama at something, it doesn’t really make me happy if it’s just about fighting.

Despite how unenthusiastic I sounded, Bard-senpai’s eyes still looked lit up passionately as he kept praising how strong he thought I was.

Well, he is a Riefenstahl after all, and they’re all about brawn over brains.

Actually, didn’t Onee-sama say something about everyone in the family being muscleheads before...?

What’s worse, the Gods have been annoyingly whispering in my ear 『An M?』 『Is he really an M?』 this whole time. That’s not it. It isn’t anything perverted, he’s just admiring a fellow warrior’s strength. I think. At least, that’s what I want to believe, and I really don’t have the guts to ask him otherwise.

“Honestly, Finne, you really are the greatest. You’re the cutest. And despite being so cute, you’re also so strong. I’m falling in love all over again. I love you, Finne.”

Whilst I was distracted by my thoughts and the God’s constant whispering, Bard-senpai seemed to have gone somewhere strange as he took my right hand which had uppercut him so hard only a little while ago, and laid a kiss on it.

But being told ‘I love you’ like that doesn’t make me happy, at least not right now...

Usually, when someone kissed the back of another person’s hand like that with so much love and so suddenly, it should make your heart skip a beat...

But right now, all I can think about is how unclear our relationship was, so I shifted awkwardly.

“‘I love you’... I’m sorry, that’s still not something I can say back to you yet...”

When I bowed my head to him sadly, Bard-senpai quickly shook his head.

“So long as you do not hate me, then I am happy. But, isn’t it at least past time where you can drop the formalitieshonorifics, though...?”

“No, well, Bard-senpai is still... That’s right, Onee-sama and the Crown Prince are still formal with each other despite being engaged, aren’t they?”

At least, when I saw them together at school, they always had a sense of distance between each other. In fact, maybe I’m being too selfish?

Bard-senpai is always trying to close the distance between us, as I try to keep him at bay. How many times must they have seen us go through this song and dance since we started being together like this?

“It can’t be helped because of their positions, but speaking of positions, as the future head of the household you are above me, Finne. Not to mention, both His Highness and myself have lost to you in combat as well...”

These Riefenstahls really are all muscleheads. Are they a pack of wild animals or something?

But, even if he tells me that I’m strong...

“The truth is, honestly, I... I’m not that happy about being strong.”

When I finally told him that, Bard-senpai looked at me like he didn’t understand.

“But, if I lost a fight, I’d die. So, I got stronger. That’s the only reason. To become the ‘strongest’ or for any other reason, I never thought about anything like that at all. I just thought there were things in my way, things that almost killed me, so I struggled for my life in such an ugly way, spitting blood and breaking bones... Before I knew it, I was strong, but it’s nothing to be proud about.”

Listening to my words tinged with self-loathing, Bard-senpai looked troubled. It looks like he’s lost in thought.

In the first place, even the way I fight is ugly.

All I do is rely on shock. I just strengthen my body and try to attack a weak point. The reason I don’t use any weapons is that I don’t even know how to use them.

An ugly way of killing, no better to what you’d see street gangs or wild animals use. That’s how I fight.

But when I’m in the thick of a fight, my head goes blank because it feels so good... That’s why I’m probably not even fit to ever be a noble girl... Compared to how ‘authentic’ Onee-sama is, whenever I think about never being able to be like her, it makes me sad.

“...Understood. I’ll become strong enough that you never have to raise a fist again, Finne.”

There was something so earnest in his words that it wiped my thoughts clean away.

“I’ll become stronger than you, Finne. If that’s truly not what you want to be, then I’ll be strong in your place.”

A person who was stronger than me. A person who wouldn’t die. A person who wouldn’t lose.

A person strong enough to overcome fate. Is that it?

When I listened to Bard-senpai’s words, I suddenly understood what I had wanted.

Ah, so that’s it.

The person I love, I always wanted them to be strong.

So, that's why I never truly liked my own strength. I was sad that I never met anyone stronger than myself.

"If I can truly become stronger than you, if I can do that, then when that day comes... I want you to marry me."

As I sat there in stunned silence, as I received the answer to a question I didn't even know I was asking, Bard-senpai kept speaking.

"Riefenstahl or not, it doesn't matter to me. Even if I had to abandon the house and my family to become an adventurer with you, I'd be happy. But, no matter what, I want you to see me as the only one who can stand by your side."

Then, Bard-senpai turned my hand over in his and kissed my palm.

His hand, was it because of all his time using a sword? It was so big and rough. And, it was warm. A strong hand.

Wanting to believe in that hand, I looked up at him and slowly nodded, just once.

---

"Finne~, did you call that Bruno 'father'~?"

I was so exhausted from both the trip to the royal palace and everything Bard-senpai put me through that I almost fell asleep on the sofa in my room, but that was before mama burst in without a single knock, a big smirk on her face.

Ever since she was taken into this house along with me, mama has really looked like a noble lady when she puts on her mask and wears those fine dresses. People would be shocked if they saw what she was really like.

"Ah... sorry. I should have told you too, mama. I know that my dad is my real papa, but, um..."

As I woke up with a start and tried to make excuses, mama coyly put a finger on my lips with a smile.

"It's alright. I know. Even if you call Bruno your father, Finne, papa and mama won't be mad, because papa will always be papa, right?"

That's right. As much as I respect Lord Bruno as my adoptive father, I hoped that one day I could call out to him like a real father. That's why, when God whispered in my ear to say it, I sort of blurted it out accidentally, but, one day I would really have to do something like that if I ever truly wanted to inherit this house, I thought.

But, it felt like I was betraying mama and papa by doing that so suddenly without even asking first. Like I was doing something sneaky, something I couldn't just blame on the Gods.

"...Yeah. Papa is still an important family member to me, since you always talked about how kind he was, mama. But, his younger brother the Marquis is just as kind as you said dad was as well... And I think those two, um, they were very important to each other as well."

As I struggled to put what I was feeling into words, mama simply smiled and nodded.

“Then, that’s fine. From now on, don’t coldly call him the Marquis and keep him at a distance, call him ‘father’ instead.”

Just as I felt a sense of relief at mama’s words, her mouth suddenly twisted into an evil looking grin again.

“But I have to say, that Bruno sure is fired up. After his cute little daughter came around to pester him, he’s been filled with motivation and is being even more strict on his poor subordinates... Or at least that’s what the report said~”

Hearing that, I wondered just who on earth that report had come from so quickly.

Was mother already using her mask as the fairy princess to get back in touch with her old contacts and make new ones in the royal palace? Had she already managed to infiltrate the knights, too? Or was she a real fairy princess, having fairies spy for her?

“...He might just be using this as an excuse to drill them more. No, it’s my fault either way.”

Every member of the Royal Knights, if the reason for your suffering is me kicking my father, then I’m sorry. As I said that gloomily, mama cocked her head to the side in confusion.

“Hm~? Well... In any case, if Liselotte can be protected, then isn’t everything fine?”

She’s right. Royal Knights, you’ll have to hang in there for now.

“It’s always important to be prepared. You can never be too prepared, you know! If there’s a crisis, you have to use everything you can.”

Nodding in agreement with mama’s words, I remembered that, no, we weren’t using everything yet.

“Mm... the Gods said that we should get Mister Leon to help as well, but they said Mister Leon is *difficult* so...”

Mister Leon had never given off the impression that he was strong, he just seems like a normal teacher.

He’s polite and his classes are easy to understand, but if you try to ask him any questions after the bell rings, he always slips away.

Mister Leon is always smiling as well, but... it’s hard to really tell what he’s feeling.

After telling mama the name of the person even the Gods thought was difficult, she looked puzzled again.

“Leon...? You mean Leon Schafe?”

Ah, right, right. That was his full name. But if you ever called him ‘Mister Schafe’, he would just ignore you.

When I nodded, mama suddenly had a strange look on her face as she opened her mouth.

“Hmm~? That kid, he’s a teacher now, huh?”

I looked at mama dubiously as she said that.

“You know him?”

Now that I think about it, I heard that Mister Leon was twenty-four years old. Sixteen years ago, when mama disappeared from the capital, he must have only been around eight years old. I wonder just how they knew each other... Wait, actually, mama should have been in her late teens back then, right? Just what were they to each other?

“Well, you see, your mama is a fairy princess, after all!”

But then, mama declared that boldly.

Fairy princess... Is she talking about something in high society? Maybe he and mother were friends?

“...You’re only a fairy princess when no one hears you talk, mama.”

That mama of mine who never told me her age looked surprised for a brief moment, before smiling at me so gently it could have been a smile from a little girl.

If this was my first time seeing her, I really would think she was a fairy princess.

Honestly... when mama wears a dress and puts on her mask, she’s really something else...

## **A Story that Has Nothing to Do with Live Commentaries or Tsundere Villainesses**

Even though I'm already twenty-four years old, the name Leon Schafe still feels strange to me.

It was a name given to me when I was seven years old, before then, I was merely called 'Leon'.

No, in truth I was always the bastard son of Count Schafe, but it wasn't until seven that I was given that name.

"From today onwards, you shall live at the main house."

The words that my mother told me so proudly profoundly changed my life forever.

Until then, I only had a single parent, and since my mother did work I didn't understand at the time, I was looked down on. My mother wasn't the type of person to pay too much attention to me, so I was always quite a wild child, until one day I was suddenly made into the legitimate son of a Count. They quickly set about taming me.

It was on my seventh birthday, the day when young sons of nobles would receive their first blessings from the Church, that it happened.

My mother suddenly drove me out of the house into a waiting carriage that was guarded by numerous armed men. My skin was scrubbed raw in a bathtub and I was forced into fine clothes I could barely move in and hard leather shoes that chafed at my ankles.

"From henceforth, you are the heir to this house. Before you are to be seen at the Church next month, there are many things that you will need to learn."

Everything that happened to me after that, I will never forget for the rest of my life. I should have escaped, even if that meant striking my own mother.

Suddenly uprooting me from my life and placing me in an environment that was so thoroughly alien to me, when I was told that a street child like me would have to learn the etiquette and manners of a noble child I thought that they would have an easier time training a performer's monkey.

But, the House of Count Schafe must have been desperate, so in order to break my resistance, they beat me, kicked me and starved me as much as they could. At the time, I truly felt like I wanted to die.

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I was hungry, aching and tired.

On one day, I had to bow my head over and over again to an endless stream of father's acquaintances, after a while it felt like I would forget how to think.

I occasionally heard them use the word 'half'. Just how long would it take for the whispers behind the back of a boy born between a noble father and a common mother to cease, I wondered at the time.

Suddenly, the Count's hall was flooded with a completely different, almost merry atmosphere.

“It’s Lady Elizabeth...” “The Fairy Princess, huh?” “As beautiful as ever, today.”

As voices rose up as if praising a new guest, I lifted my face to see a young lady being escorted arm-in-arm by an older gentleman I could only assume was her father. She was so beautiful that I didn’t think she was of this world.

Both her face and body were petite and delicate as a flower, with a mysterious air around her befitting the title of a spirit princess of the forest. And as all eyes in the hall turned to admire her, a gentle smile spread across her lips.

“I believe congratulations are in order, for today.”

Even as that older gentleman called out to my father and the two of them began to talk, I was so captivated by that young lady’s beauty that I could scarcely think to blink, much less listen.

As that girl met my insolent stare, her smile grew wider.

When she did, the people around me, myself included, let out a sigh at how lovely a sight it was.

It was at that moment...

I saw the hand of the fairy princess move, just for an instant.

“Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaa!”

She suddenly screamed loudly.

“Elizabeth, what’s the matter!?”

When her father turned around and asked her that, the Fairy Princess shook on the spot, barely able to open her mouth.

“Just now, I thought I saw... a rat!?”

As everyone followed her line of sight, sure enough, a not so insignificantly sized rat scurried across the floor.

It was strange that it would show itself around so many people like that.

I calmly thought that to myself back then, but the reactions of the nobles in the hall, especially the woman, turned into quite a din.

“KyaaaaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!”

The panicked screams quickly spread across the hall like mania, soon becoming earsplitting.

As people crisscrossed, either fleeing from the rat or pursuing it, the hall soon turned chaotic.

But honestly, it was just a rat? Sure, it might not be the cleanest sort of animal, but it wasn’t something so dangerous to cause such an uproar.

Well, I suppose I was the only one who thought that way.

As I was watching the nonsense unfold in front of me, suddenly someone caught my hand as a gaggle of young ladies fleeing the rat rushed past me.



“Fairy... Princess...?”

As her soft to the touch yet powerful hand pulled me along, she flashed me that gentle smile just like before as I left the hall alongside her.

---

It was all I could do to follow her in silence, my eyes staring in bewilderment at her hand that held mine.

Opening the door to a parlour that was kept vacant in case of any lord or lady drinking too much, she quickly pulled me inside and locked the door behind her.

“Haa... That was so damn boring, huh!?”

...Fairy Princess?

As she cracked the joints in her neck, the image of the unapproachable Fairy Princess shattered before my eyes, replaced instead with something much more like the common girls I was used to.

“Don’t worry, it’s a mess out there. I saw some idiot try to use fire magic to try and kill it as we were leaving, so I’m sure the place is in complete chaos now.”

Apparently, she misunderstood the face I must have been making as one of worry, my mouth agape as I witnessed her change before my very eyes.

She must have thought that I was anxious about my father punishing me for leaving without permission, but I didn’t care about that then.

“Jeez, just one little rat and they get their britches in such a twist, huh?”

It seemed like she was trying to make me into her co-conspirator. Well, I didn’t think she was wrong about that, but...

“...That rat, you were the one who let it out after all, weren’t you?”

She wasn’t really frightened by that rat.

As I asked her that question, based on what I’d seen just before, she nodded curtly.

“Right. I found him when I was stealing food from the kitchen this morning; my fellow thief, Karschen.”

“You’ve named him...?”

Just where did the princess I met mere minutes ago wander off to?

Even myself at the time, who was still barely familiar with the ways of the nobility, knew that stealing food and consorting with rats was no way for a young lady to behave. She sure was a strange princess.

As I looked at her dubiously, she giggled.

“Well, I did name him, but Karschen really is an excellent rat, so I’m sure he’ll escape. It was thanks to him that we escaped as well.”

I thought that I would have to thank him as well at some point.

Although I nodded in response, I kept silently staring at her.

“That’s an awful face you’re wearing there, Leon. You probably don’t even realize it yourself, huh?”

As she returned my stare, she suddenly pulled something from the sleeve of her beautiful dress.

“Here, I swiped some of the biscuits that the chef made as snacks! Eat up!”

When I looked at the wrapping paper she unfurled in her hand with a smile, there were, in fact, several cookies inside.

Just who taught her to be like this?

Although I had my doubts, I couldn’t deny the hunger in my gut as I reached out and took one.

“Thank you... very much...”

“It’s no big deal.”

After thanking her, I slowly ate one biscuit, then reached my hand out to wolf down the other one. Ah. They were delicious.

“If anyone gets mad at you, just tell them that the lovely and delicate flower called the ‘Fairy Princess’ grew faint at the sight of a rat, and you escorted her to the parlour to recuperate. Of course, I’ll back you up.”

As she nibbled on a biscuit herself, she told me that.

I didn’t object, but I was sure that no matter what I said, no one would believe me anyway. What she said did sound like a good excuse, but the reality was that we were sitting together in a parlour, munching on cookies. It was strange, to say the least.

“...That rat from before, how did you bring it with you?”

I couldn’t hold back my curiosity anymore, so I asked her.

“Magic~. Just like that, I put him to sleep and had him rest in my sleeve... Ah, in the opposite sleeve to the cookies, okay? So anyway, just as I shook my arm and let him out, I released my magic. It must’ve been a shock for poor little Karschen, being woken up like that.”

“You can do something like that...?”

As I watched her in wonder, she took the last bite of her biscuit and rested her hand on her cheek.

“Mm... No, it’s actually sort of a forbidden spell. I might get in trouble if people knew I could do it, so let’s just keep it between us, okay?”

She smirked at me mischievously.

Thinking about it back then, I really did think that anyone who could induce a coma with magic might actually be trouble themselves. I didn't know a thing about magic at the time, but even I knew that was dangerous.

"Just what kind of person are you...?"

"What kind...? I guess if you were gonna hold a knife to my throat, I'm the ambitious sort? If I want to see my plans through, I can't be too fussy about the means. For that reason, if I have to use criminal magic or play a part in front of scum day in day out, then so be it."

Despite those words, she grinned at me.

"This is just my advice, but it's always a good idea to keep your best cards held close to your chest. And if you ever become someone strong someday, all the more reason to. You look weak, and everyone sneers at you, using the word 'half'. If you ask me, being surrounded by people who look down on you is the best thing you could ask for."

"Being looked down on is... good?"

When I asked her that, she nodded firmly.

"It's good. If they only think that you're a fool who can only smile and nod on command, then your enemy will always be caught off guard at the most crucial moment."

"Enemy...?"

"Enemies. In my case, both my family and noble society, they're all enemies. They're the greatest enemy I've ever faced, trying to tear what I love away from me."

There was suddenly a hollowness to her voice, and a spark of hatred in her eyes.

Just a short time ago in that hall, she seemed like the centre of attention of that noble society she claimed to hate, so at the time I truly considered it a mystery.

"Leon, you're the same, right? That's to say, you should never trust anything a noble says. At the very least, not someone like Count Schafe."

I had already come to believe that. So, when she told me that with a serious tone, I merely nodded.

He was a man I hadn't ever seen in my seven years of life, who suddenly picked me up and kept me for his own purposes. I couldn't trust him at all, and just like she said, I should consider him an enemy. However...

"Something like that, like what you can... Will I be able to do it too?"

However, when I asked if I would truly ever have the power to fight back one day, she scrunched her face up slightly as she thought.

"I wonder...? It'll be tough work, for sure. That kind of magic, well, to be honest, it's more of a curse, when you're learning it and you're not used to it at all, it can rebound on the caster, you know? I once put myself out for three days. But thanks to that, the people around me suddenly had a picture of me being delicate and sickly, so it all turned out alright."

Even though she said that with a laugh, it definitely sounded hard.

“Even so, I... I still want to learn. I want to be strong... Like you.”

As I looked up at her like that, she covered her mouth with a hand.

“Oh stop, you’re embarrassing me~ Mm, well, from today on you’ll be my disciple then, Leon? But keep in mind that I’m self-taught and I don’t plan to stay in the royal capital long... what’s more, I can only teach you about the stuff behind the Academy’s secret doors.”

“Academy?”

“Yeah, the one I’m currently attending, though I’ll probably have to run away before my graduation if I want to see this elopement through, but August’s health is... Well, you don’t need to hear about that. At any rate, you’ll probably be attending that place when you’re fifteen too, Leon, the Royal Academy of Magic... That place is positively antique at this point, and it’s like an endless patchwork of new buildings layered on top of the old, I doubt anyone really has a full idea of the entire place nowadays. And, it’s sort of a sanctuary where even the state, let alone my family, can interfere easily, so it’s the perfect place to hide some dangerous books. So that being said, my collection is at the school in a secret place, so I’ll teach you how to find it and open it up! Is that okay, Leon?”

“Yeah...”

And so, the young lady who became my Master soon fought her battle against the Duke of Marschner for the sake of her beloved.

She escaped from the clutches of high society and, for fifteen years, protected the lives of both herself and her child. I always kept the memory of that person who I loved.

We only knew each other for half a year, nothing more.

Still, she was the amazing teacher who reached a hand out to me, taught me how to both cast magic and wear a mask, and showed me her method of winning.

She was the person I respected more than anyone in the entire world.

---

But the person who really hadn’t changed at all over those past fifteen or sixteen years in the end was Master.

“Yahoo~ Leooooon~ You sure got big, huh~?”

“Just what are you doing...?”

The woman who was now hanging upside down in my trap, waving at me with a smile.

## **Master (Leon's Side)**

Even though I had been disinherited from the family of Count Schafe and now lived alone as a teacher, I still heard the rumours that she had returned to the capital.

That's why, I had held some hope that in some way, in some form, we might meet again.

There was so much I wanted to thank her for, so much of what I had accomplished I wanted to show her. There was so much that I wanted to tell her.

But, the one thing I really wanted to say to her, at least, was that I'm glad she managed to return back alive. However...

"Ah, damn it, what do you think you're doing!? If you thrash around that much, you'll hurt your neck!"

Just what was this? Why was I having to struggle to get Master down from the trap she was hanging upside down in? What kind of stupid excuse for a heartfelt reunion was this?

"Ugh... I just came here to see my cute little disciple... But what's with the strength...?"

Was it because of my words or the enchantment on the rope? At any rate, her body relaxed.

"Well, there's definitely a few things to this rope. Just staying conscious is actually quite impressive."

A weakening spell, a coma-inducing curse, a paralysis enchantment... I encountered a few other spells I didn't even remember putting into this length of rope as I slowly and carefully disenchanted the thing.

Although, the first person who ever triggered my trap was Master... but perhaps this level of spellmanship is ineffective against her? It needs more refinement...

"After sixteen years, even my adorable disciple has gotten taller than me... And you can even cast forbidden curses like that now..."

As I was lost in thought, I heard Master's voice in my ear.

Whilst I'm glad to hear the praise, what's really quite staggering is that in just a few minutes Master has become the only person to ever see my true side like this. At any rate, it wouldn't do to be overly pleased, so I tried to answer her back coldly.

"Well, I have no lack of enemies. What's more, people would truly be shocked if they saw what I held in this room. Honestly speaking, this much security isn't even enough."

One of the hidden rooms that I inherited from Master.

When she finally freed herself from the cursed rope, I motioned to the collections on the shelves around us and a nostalgic smile spread across her face.

---

“So, what’s the real reason that you suddenly came here at this time? You’re not going to lie about just being in the neighbourhood, are you?”

It was already the dead of night. If I hadn’t realized that she, or some other intruder, had broken into this room of mine, I would already be asleep by now.

Since she was the one who taught me how to set up a magical alarm system, surely she must have known that I would rush here straight away after she triggered it, since there was no way I could just go to bed knowing there was an intruder. I wish she could have just paid me a visit during the day, though.

When I questioned her doubtfully, she shook her head.

“No, it’s true, you know? Have a look at this.”

What she pulled out of her dress pocket was a mask with feline-like features, but only made so that it would cover the top part of her face.

A mask. The middle of the night. I didn’t have any information about any sort of gathering happening nearby tonight... So, it was something like that, then?

“Ahh, a masquerade ball, was there something like that happening around here tonight...?”

A masquerade. Although clandestine meetings were often done wearing masks, balls and parties held behind closed doors with such disguises were popular in the capital, often leading to one night only *rendezvous* of sorts.

Noticing my barely disguised derision of the entire sordid practice, she spat out a sigh.

“Right. Apparently, I’m officially a widow now? I’m not sure how, since I was never married, but that’s happened all the same. One of the morons from my parents’ house tried to hit on me, asking me if I had a ‘taste’ for such things. Damn it all, sixteen years have passed and they’re all still such shithheads!”

Uwah... She really hasn’t changed much either, though... After laughing venomously, she continued angrily.

“The old man Marschner must have heard about everything that happened and is trying to pull me back into the fold. But, I couldn’t think of anything else I wanted to do less, so I faked an illness and thought that would be the end of it, but then I realized that the venue was unexpectedly quite close to the school. So, after sleeping for a while, I slipped away in the middle of the night to come and see my cute little disciple again, that’s all.”

Just who was trying to suit her? Actually, I really shouldn’t ask.

As I caught myself glaring at the mask when listening to that unsavoury story, she threw it at me as I barely caught it in time.

“Here, take it. The mask itself is a sign of invitation, so if you wear it you’ll be allowed into the venue. Whether you’re interested in gathering some intelligence or just playing with fire, it’ll be useful either way.”

“No, but, this is a woman’s mask, isn’t it?”

Surely, as an outcast of a noble it was difficult to gather information in aristocratic circles so getting into such a venue would be invaluable, but there's no chance I would be allowed through the door wearing a mask like this. In the first place, I'm not really that interested in 'playing with fire'.

When I said that, she clapped her hands together forcefully.

"Is that so? Then, you don't want it?"

"No, I'll take it. Besides, I don't want you to have something like this on you."

"...Oho?"

It seemed like she caught the intention of my words as she craned her neck up at me.

"Because you're the master that's precious to me, and I've always admired. I'd rather not see you get caught up in something dangerous."

When she heard that, she covered up her grin as she giggled happily.

"Oh my, Leon, you really have gotten big, huh~?"

She didn't have any mercy for her disciple, as I didn't mince my words.

"Yes, that's right, I'm already the same age as your husband was back then."

Then, I took a step. She watched me calmly as I stepped closer towards her.

"Ah, that's right, isn't it...? But, for me, to love anyone other than August is..."

She spoke the truth. There wasn't any trembling in her voice, if I pushed her too hard here she would go on to firmly reject me.

"I know. But you saved me, so I admire and respect you, and if there's anything I can ever do for you, I want to do it. That's all I was thinking."

For now, at least. But, I left that last part out.

When she heard those words of mine, that sly smile returned to her lips.

"Is that so? Well then, when it comes to my little Finne, could I ask *Mister Leon* to give her some supplementary lessons?"

Seeing that she was trying to lighten the mood a little bit, I smiled as well as I replied.

"That seems like an awful pain, I don't want to do it. Besides, even if I don't do anything, I'm sure that elder sister of hers Liselotte Riefenstahl will do something anyway."

"What a heartless disciple you are! As your Master, I don't remember raising you to be such a cruel child!"

"I don't remember you raising me in the first place."

As I caught her eye, we both cracked into grins as we laughed.

Even if she won't let me get closer than this, for now, it isn't so bad either.

“Hey, Master... on that day, why did you decide to make me your disciple?”

As a soft silence descended after our laughter, I gently decided to ask the question that had been burning me ever since we parted.

“Hmm~... Well, compared to most people, I’ve always sort of lived on instinct. That was the reason I picked up Karschen that day in the kitchen as well, but if you ask me for a specific reason, hmm...”

She paused as if she were chewing on the words before finally letting them out.

“Well, if you were going to twist my hand for an answer, when I saw you that day you had a face that looked like it was saying ‘I’ve already given up’, so I guess I wanted to see it crack a smile someday, or something like that?”

Hearing her words, I couldn’t stop the big smile creeping to my face, which the Fairy Princess returned with her own soft and elegant smile.

I may have surpassed her when it came to spell casting and forbidden curses, but when it came to wearing masks, I’m not sure I’ll ever surpass Master. And, for some reason, that made me happy.



## **A Dream (Liselotte's Side)**

Over the past several days, His Highness has concerned himself with me to an awfully strange degree.

Flowers and gems with handwritten letters attached arrive at my home every day, whilst at the Academy, he calls out to me without any hesitation whatsoever. Even if he's with someone else, he'll break off his conversation to talk to me.

For someone who always treated people equally, this truly was strange.

"Liselotte, what kind of dress would you like to wear during Thanksgiving? I'd like to match designs with my partner, but I also want to give you something new as well... do you have anything particular in mind?"

He's still doing it. After classes, he told me to join him in his carriage because he had something of the utmost importance to discuss, then asked me such a thing. Is this really such urgent business?

"So long as I do not have to wear some vulgar thing that detracts from His Highness' dignity, then I am not wholly concerned. However, even should I say such a thing, naturally, you have something you wish to suggest?"

As I calmly said such words without even a hint of charm, I desperately struggled to calm down the feelings in my heart.

Because the Riefenstahl manor in the capital is nearby the royal palace, we often go home in the same direction, but never together like this.

And just why was this carriage such a small thing? Wait just a minute... aren't we far too close to each other!?

"That's right, personally I'd like us to wear something with gold. Because it would match the colour of my eyes, as well as your hair."

Saying that, His Highness took a lock of my hair and played with it between his fingers.

"My hair, it will become unruly, so please stop that."

As he drew nearer with that smile, my breaths became more ragged and painful to squeeze out.

"Ah, I'm sorry about that. Maybe next time, you won't mind it if I made your hair a little messy, right?"

Saying that, His Highness let my hair go. That wound-up lock of hair, one piece of a large body of work it takes three maids all morning to get ready, returned to its original form, but the words 'next time' only made me more nervous.

Make it... messy? ...How, exactly?

"Please stop playing games with me at once!!"

Screaming that out as a strange thought almost entered my head, His Highness merely chuckled.

"Ha... hahaha! Ah, I'm sorry, Liselotte. You're just so cute, I couldn't help myself."

As His Highness said such an obvious lie, I glared at him.

It was unthinkable for me to be called ‘cute’.

Often at various soirées or balls, men other than His Highness will pay me compliments out of courtesy, but even then the only words people would use were terms like ‘beautiful’.

Knowing that I’ll never be cute like Finne or Fabian was a sad thought all of its own.

“You’re the cutest girl in the entire world, Liselotte.”

Even as I scowled at him, His Highness still had that gentle smile on his face.

I’m happy. I’m ashamed. I’m sad. I’m frustrated.

As a wave of conflicting emotions I couldn’t understand flooded through me, I tore my face away from His Highness and turned my glare to the scenery flowing by the carriage window.

Ahh, truly, it’s all just too sad, too frustrating... and too painful.

Because the only reason that His Highness is so strangely concerned for me these past few days, and even the words he spoke just now, all of it was surely borne out of pity.

What’s more, I’ve been having those strange dreams again as of late, so it’s hard to even think normally.

Was he doing this out of obligation for our engagement? Or out of respect for the Riefenstahl family? Either way, I shouldn’t raise any strange expectations.

Those words and smiles that made me so frustratingly happy, I would only sink further into a hopeless love if I believed in them... that’s what I thought.

---

Ah, this dream once again?

I’ve almost grown wholly apathetic to the nightmares that haunt my dreams.

Suspended in a darkness deeper than the abyss, where I cannot even talk or move, surrounded by hateful voices slithering past my ears... a hateful dream.

“You really aren’t a cute girl at all.”

Yes, I know that. However, if one aims to be Queen, it is only natural to avoid showing weakness.

“You aren’t loved by anyone at all.”

No, I have a family who does.

“Your everything will be stolen away by that child, Finne.”

Unfortunately for you, on the contrary, she gives me a lot every single day.

“Isn’t it frustrating?”

No.

“Isn’t it sad?”

No.

“Isn’t it... *envious*?”

No.

There was once a time when this snake-like voice had the power to move me, but after having this dream time and time again, I’ve grown used to it.

As per usual, I couldn’t rebuke its words with my own, but I can hold my answers true within myself.

“If only that child weren’t here... haven’t you thought about it?”

No. If that child wasn’t here, then I truly would be sad.

I listened to its offensive drivel that once I couldn’t bear to hear impassively. These spiteful words, I know that they’re only trying to hurt me?

“You may love that man now, but in time he too will surely change. He will take that child’s hand in his, and cast you aside.”

However, with those words, I couldn’t simply let them be.

Don’t be ridiculous!!

That person would never do such a thing!!

How hard he works every day, how much he tempers his own feelings, how much loneliness he has to withstand, how much he does for his country, how could you ever understand him!? How dare you judge him!?

How dare you try to make a fool out of him!?

“Eh...?”

The voice stopped.

My anger, was it received?

My name is Liselotte Riefenstahl.

A proud daughter of the Riefenstahl family.

I shall become the Queen to the Crown Prince, His Highness Prince Siegward.

In order to protect him, I was granted the favour of the Goddess.

At such a time, in such a place, how could I not fight back for his sake?

As I told myself those words, I felt sensation return to my body that hung in the dark... feelings returning to my fingertips.

“Eh... that can’t be...”

That unpleasant voice seemed upset.

Oh, *so that’s where you were.*

“Ah...!”

The owner of that despicable voice, the Ancient Witch, took a sharp intake of breath.

And now, I’ll cut you down myself...

---

“...Don’t play games with me... Ancient... Witch...”

As I awoke in the morning, that murmur spilt out from my lips.

It escaped.

The moment that I finally opened my eyes to look at it, and took a step forward to cut it down, the owner of that voice fled and I awoke in my bed.

“Ahh, honestly, how frustrating...!”

I screamed that out in anger as I jumped out of bed.

No matter what you say, I will one day become Queen of this country. I will marry Prince Siegwand.

Even if he doesn’t love me, it doesn’t matter to me.

I will simply love him selfishly instead.

With that one-sided love, that unrequited yearning, I will do everything I can to support him, he who carries a country’s weight on his shoulders.

I will not lose. To Finne, to the Ancient Witch, to anyone.

“But, in saying that, His Highness not understanding at least that much is... it really is quite frustrating?”

I remembered the past few days spent with my strange fiancée.

Do not make light of my resolve, I will certainly overcome this ancient witch; I wanted to tell him that. Rather, I should tell him. Then, these strange days that have been bad for my heart will surely come to an end.

With frustration and anger flowing through my chest, I made up my mind.



## Stop Running Away!

That evening, in my chamber of the royal castle, I had a direct conference with the Gods, along with Finne and Baldur.

“These past few days, Liselotte Onee-sama has been having nightmares again.”

『Being jerked awake by those horrible dreams, softly calling out Sieg’s name in her sleep, she’s only honest with herself then... Somehow, we have to help her...』

『Following the game’s plot, the Ancient Witch should appear at the end of autumn. It’s almost time for the enemy to get serious as well... The Ancient Witch has to be defeated, without fail.』

Finne, as well as the Gods Endow and Coebayashay. All three of them shared my deep concern for Liselotte’s wellbeing... wait just a moment, why do all of them know so much about Liselotte’s sleep? Were they watching her? Especially you, Endow? I felt that frustrating boiling up inside me again.

“Even I can see that Liese seems quite unstable recently. She’ll go from threatening me with grave consequences if I ever let Finne go, to complaining to me about how she doesn’t feel ‘cute’ at all, then she would go and apply that strict ‘instruction’ of hers to Artur Richter... actually, isn’t that last one just stress relief?”

“It should be alright since Richter-senpai is sturdy. If he wants to be as strong as me, that kind of near-death experience is *necessary*. Well, I can’t deny that probably is how Onee-sama lets off steam as well.”

Listening to Finne and Baldur’s conversation, as much pity as I felt for Art, the first thing on my mind after all was what I could do for Liselotte.

In any case, Art had originally wanted to train with Miss Finne, which was probably a far worse fate than whatever Liselotte was putting him through.

Besides, I doubt Liselotte would go too far and even if she did, Art’s recovery magic was on-par with the best of them. I felt sorry for Art as a friend, but it was important for Liselotte to relieve her stress somehow.

Me thinking that Liselotte was the cutest person in the entire world is completely irrelevant to that, alright?

“...Still, we have to do something quickly...”

As I muttered that to myself, the Riefenstahl pair nodded seriously.

『In the game, the thing that is necessary to save Liselotte from being possessed by the witch and for no one to die is for one person to protect Liselotte’s heart from the Ancient Witch’s power, as well as having enough party strength to defeat it outright.』

『This level of strength should be fine, right? I mean, in the Baldur route, you can win just with Finne and Baldur once Finne awakens, right? Actually, if anything, I think we might have gone overkill now...』

『No, because in that route the Ancient Witch had already possessed Liselotte's body. The Ancient Witch doesn't have a physical form so regular attacks won't have an effect. Well, its not too strong without a host, so we should have enough strength? I think so, anyways. But the most important thing, for now, is protecting Rize-tan's heart! In the game it was Finne, but here it has to be Sieg! We're counting on you!!』

I felt a little restless as I heard the words of the Gods.

Finne and her adoptive father General Riefenstahl and Liselotte with Fabian Ortenburg, both had won powerful allies over to my side, and now the rest relied on my own effort. I knew just how much weighed on my shoulders.

Despite that sense of ugly jealousy I felt at how close Liselotte and Fabian had become, I wanted to make Liselotte my partner not just in name but in reality as soon as I could.

And yet...

“But, Onee-sama is still running away, right!?”

As Finne said that with a laugh at the God's voices, I hung my head silently.

Yes, she's still running away.

The more I try to show Liselotte how much she means to me, the more she pushes me away.

All of the presents I gave her she only received on behalf of the Riefenstahl house, every time I pay her a compliment she thinks I'm trying to make her a fool of her, and even today in the carriage she wouldn't let me touch a hair on her head.

“Yeah. A flustered and fleeing Liselotte is cute as well, but, to be blunt, it's a little frustrating that she can't be more honest with her feelings...”

When I said that, Baldur heaved a sigh.

“I can't apologize enough. Liese has always been dedicated to studying as hard as she could so that she could stand next to you, without really having anyone to confide in. So when it comes to personal relationships, she doesn't really have that much experience... even when it comes to something like ‘having friends’...”

Apparently, Liselotte never really had friends around her age growing up.

Even if she seemed to make good connections in high society, it was less friendship and more paying reverence to those above her station and being admired by those below her... never anyone she could be on equal terms with.

『Is this the result of her love-at-first-sight finally becoming complicated after ten years...!?!』

『Mmm, well, maybe it's just that she loves Sieg too much? ‘I'm scared of being too happy!’ Something like that? ‘Happy endings like this don't just happen!’ Or like that?』

“I agree with the opinion of the great Kobayashi. Onee-sama holds His Highness Prince Siegwand on quite a pedestal, right? Even though you're only human, Your Highness, she holds you so dear that

you're probably more like a God to her? Actually, maybe her love is reaching the level of faith? Well, even if she's running away from you, she definitely doesn't hate you, so maybe you just have to corner her like a hunter and not let her escape?"

I was a little stunned by Finne's blunt response to the Gods' words.

"But if you do that, she might have a heart attack...?"

Baldur spoke seriously, but Finne just laughed and smiled at him.

"It'll be fine! Even if her heart stops, Richter-senpai and I can just heal her!"

So she says, but I'm fairly sure she's the only one Finne is the only one 'fine' with that outcome.

That's what I thought to myself, but so far as I know no one has ever died from a heart attack due to embarrassment before, so it may actually be fine after all.

"Well, the fact of the matter is that I can't afford to hold back anymore, so even if I have to do something unreasonable, I'll have Liselotte recognize my feelings."

As I made a declaration, Finne nodded with a smile and Baldur looked at me in surprise.

"Your Highness, to go so far for Liese... in fact, if I may, it's surprising to see you be so concerned with one person at all."

As I listened to Baldur's words, I remembered Art saying something similar a while ago about me having changed.

"Even I can fall in love with someone... or feel jealous. Well, it's true that until now I've been in a position where it would be troublesome for me to show my emotions too much... But why would showing my future Queen Liselotte my favour be a problem? If anything, it's what I should be doing."

At my words, Baldur nodded firmly.

But, as I thought about my own words, perhaps I really wasn't that good at really showing my favour when I wanted to, since I had gone so long without letting my feelings show?

"Honestly... I guess I just have to do my best...?"

To no one in particular, I muttered that.

『Do your best, Sieg!』

『Sieg is the only one who can really make Rize-tan happy! Do your best! We're rooting for you as well!』

Encouraged by the sage words of Endow and Coebayashay, I felt my determination come back in waves the next day.

—

Today being a holiday from the Academy, when Liselotte invited herself to the castle with the words 'I have something I wish to tell you, so can Your Highness spare a moment of his time?' I accepted without a second thought.



“Because I love you, I will **never** lose to the Ancient Witch.”

And so, this girl who had been bashful and on the verge of fleeing every time we talked recently, suddenly declared such a thing to me boldly completely out of the blue.

Even though she told me that she loved me, there wasn't anything sweet about her words... those violet eyes of hers were cool and hard... rather, don't they look angry?

Umm, what is exactly is going on suddenly...?

## Together

“Because I love you, I will **never** lose to the Ancient Witch.”

『Congratulations! Liselotte has gone from a tsundere to a *tsungire*!【1】』

『I wonder if this could really be called progress... Actually, maybe this is the Ancient Witch’s attack on her heart taking on some really weird shape...? Well, it’s true that Rize-tan definitely seems a bit more *gire* right now.』

As Endow sounded like he was making an impossible to understand joke and Coebayashay somehow made even less sense, I was completely lost.

This is strange.

Yesterday, when Finne sat on the same couch where Liselotte was sitting now, with Baldur standing behind her, I had talked with them about how worried I was that Liselotte was always running away from me. After that, I was determined to chase her even more.

So, why was Liselotte suddenly swearing such an oath to me with such a deadly serious face?

“Thank... you...?”

Even though I was utterly confused, I managed to squeeze out words of gratitude somehow, at which Liselotte looks satisfied with a sharp nod.

“Yes, I will never lose to such a base thing. No, in fact, I feel that when I think of you, there’s nothing I could lose to.

I only realized last night, but it seems that if my feelings are strong enough, I’m able to interact with that *thing* in the darkness. How much I love His Highness, how wonderful a person you are... should it take two or three nights, or even forever, I’m sure that those feelings I have for you can let me prevail over *that*. ”

With burning anger behind those eyes and a conversely cold rage on her tongue, Liselotte smiled with a sigh.

“Whenever I think of Your Highness, Prince Siegward, I can’t help but feel a sense of warmth and joy. In order to stand next to your side, I’ll do anything. So, in that sense, I should be the one to thank you.”

She continued to speak with a smile, whereas all I could do was listen to her words with an inscrutable face.

“Therefore, I shall be fine. Because of how much I love you, I will be fine. I am sure over the past few days, I must have caused Finne and Baldur no end of worry, but I no longer fear that witch... Your Highness, recently, were you also trying to show your concern in your own way?”

『Mmmmmm!? What’s with this sudden turn of the tide...!?』

『Because Liselotte has such an idealized view of Sieg, it seems that she has applied some sort of deeper meaning to what he was trying to do over these past few days? When in truth, he was just bitter

and jealous about Fabian-kyun being recognized by her as something like a little brother. And Sieg is usually way too calm and cool, it was surprising.』

As much as I hated to admit it, what Coebayashay said was the truth, but Liselotte, who couldn't hear the voice of the Goddess, just smiled weakly and sadly, saying 'I understand now,' as if accepting some deep pain.

"You no longer need to concern yourself over me anymore. So long as you continue to exist, that's more than enough for me. That alone is all I need to continue to keep supporting and loving you selfishly. To keep on living."

Then, Liselotte stopped talking, letting go of a long-held breath with a sigh.

Even if it doesn't solve our misunderstandings, I'm still glad to hear her say that she loves me in such a straight forward way. It was still strange to think that the girl who was often so curt and distant with me really thought of me in such a way.

No, my instincts are screaming at me right now that if I miss this opportunity, I'll never again be able to hear her be so honest with her feelings.

She's been talking about how much she loves me as if it's just a natural thing, but if it wasn't for the Gods of Play-by-Play and Colour Commentary, I would never have thought of it at all.

As her face looked like it was about to burst into tears at any moment, I finally opened my mouth.

"Liselotte."

As I called her name out to stop her before she did, she looked up at me like she was in a daze.

"You're overrating me far too much."

With those words, I walked over to the sofa and sat next to her.

"Your Highness...? What are you...!?"

When Liselotte reflexively tried to pull away from me, I pulled her into a hug to stop her escaping and spoke slowly.

"Hey, Liselotte? I love you dearly as well, you know?"

"Please don't play games with me! Even if you don't show me pity like this, I will never lose to that Ancient Witch and I will carry out my duties as the future Queen without fail!!"

Not being believed like that was painful.

As Liselotte yelled angrily, trying to pull herself out of my grip, I kept going.

"Liselotte... Liese."

When I said that nickname, she suddenly stopped struggling.

"You know, I've wanted to call you Liese for a long time? Every time you let Baldur call you that, I felt incredibly jealous. In fact, I'm still jealous about how close that kid Fabian Ortenburg has gotten to you, and I'm not happy about how dear even your sister, Miss Finne, is to you."

As I hugged Liselotte close, or rather kept clinging on to her like my life depended on it, I told her how I felt.

“As you can see, I’m honestly more of a shameless person than you think. But because of my position, and the people around me, when it comes to the things I love and the things I hate, I’ve always had trouble expressing them... But, still...”

But, still, I want you to believe me. As expected, complaining like this really is uncool, isn’t it? But Coebayashay was saying before that I was ‘too’ cool, wasn’t she?

“I... I too... when it came to Finne and Artur Richter... I was jealous.”

As I fretted, suddenly Liselotte’s quiet voice snuck into my ears.

“You’re... always so kind to everyone, but especially when it came to Finne who was so sweet and kind... I was envious. And I was jealous of Artur Richter, who was able to talk so freely with you.”

“...We’re the same, then.”

As I spoke softly, her trembling hands wrapped their way around my back.

“Your Highness, do you truly feel the same way that I do? That you truly love me in the same way that I love you... is it really okay for me to so selfishly believe that?”

Her voice was even weaker now as her hands touched me, her body trembling in my embrace.

As I squeezed her even tighter, I answered.

“I want you to be selfish. I want you to believe it... because I love you. I’m so happy that you’re my fiancée.”

When I said that, Liselotte began to tremble even more.

“I always wanted to be loved by you... That dream, I always, always... I always kept hoping, ever since I met you...”

As she said those words, obvious choked with tears that I couldn’t quite see, I suddenly remembered those words her father had said, about her ‘dream’.

Ahh, jeez, Liselotte really is impossibly cute. My fiancée is the cutest. The cutest in the world.

Just as I was about to melt into a puddle at her cuteness, Liselotte suddenly pressed her face into my chest and held me still with an unbelievable amount of strength.

“...W-what should I do...?”

As she said something I didn’t understand, I tilted my head ponderously.

“I... I’m too ashamed right now, so for you to see my face would be... so, for now, I can’t let you go.”

...You’re not more embarrassed about just how tightly you’re hugging me right now?

Do I point that out and get to behold Liselotte’s beautifully embarrassed face? Or do I hold my tongue and enjoy this hug for a while longer?

As I weighed up that terrible choice in my mind, I could hear the Gods cheering loudly from wherever they were.

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**[1] A tsungire is what you get when a tsundere ‘snaps’ (hence the ‘gire’).**

**【Get It Off Your Chest!】**

After seeing Siegward and Liselotte finally come to terms with each other's feelings, Kobayashi-san let out a shout of joy. Or, to be more accurate, a strange scream that I could barely understand.

“HYAAAAAAHAAAAA!!!! MYYYYOHHHHAAAAAA! HYAAAAHA HA HA HA HA OHHHHHHHHHH!”



She jumped up and down like a mad woman, but there was no mistaking the big grin on her face.

At any rate, it was obvious how happy she was. That being said, I still couldn't understand her incoherent screaming.

"I'm really glad as well, but... for the time being, maybe you should calm down just a little bit...?"

Even though I said that she kept didn't stop yelling and running about at all. She probably didn't even hear me.

As things began to progress nicely in the game just now, she had managed to keep her cool, and we even exchanged a high five and a 'yay!'.

But now, it seems as if Kobayashi-san has finally reached her limit, as she stepped away from the screen and completely abandoned her commentary, and is now doing some sort of strange interpretive dance.

Even after I saved the game and turned off the console, she didn't calm down at all. Just... just how long is this going to go on, I wonder?

Well, today is a Saturday and we're the only ones in Kobayashi-san's house, so no matter how many completely unintelligible songs she bellows out it's not as if we'll get into any trouble, but... well, it's a little lonely, I guess.

"HYAHAAAAA.... ah."

Just as Kobayashi-san was about to lose her balance attempting some kind of spin, I managed to catch her just in time.

"Oh, oops..."

I managed to catch her just before I toppled over, but she was spinning around with such force that I couldn't actually stay upright, as we toppled over together. My elbows and knees that smacked onto the floor really ached.

"Sorry!"

Kobayashi-san quickly wiggled out of my arms as she said that, sitting on the floor next to me.

It was just for the briefest of moments, but... she was so soft.

"I'm really sorry, Endo-kun, I got carried away! Thanks for catching me like that! Are you hurt anywhere!?"

Kobayashi-san quickly looked between my arms, shoulders and face to see if there were any cuts or bruises, not realizing it was only my joints that took the brunt of the fall. Obviously, I didn't say anything.

Kobayashi-san was so close though it feels like my heart is going to jump out of my throat.

"Ah, I'm fine. Are you alright, Kobayashi-san? Calmed down yet?"

As I raised both my hands, trying to convince her I was fine, Kobayashi-san nodded gently with a cute smile.

I can't say I didn't enjoy seeing that energetic side of her jumping around just a moment ago, but after all, I really do prefer seeing her like this.

"Yep, I calmed down a little! Not completely though! I'm too happy to do that!

'Liselotte and Siegward! The ship finally sailed!!', I want to shout out something like that to the whole world! At least, I want to broadcast it through the school! Maybe as part of the 【Get It Off Your Chest!】 event at the school festival!!"

The thing that Kobayashi-san was talking about with a beaming smile on her face was the event that the Broadcasting Club runs at every school festival, the next one coming up in about a month halfway through November, called 【Get It Off Your Chest!】.

On the day of the festival, the club members will gather any of the students or visitors who felt like they had something they wanted to shout out. After an interview, we'll record what they want to yell. So long as it's all above board, it's broadcast to the entire school during the festival.

Of course, a lot of clubs and circles use it to advertise, but there's no shortage of confessions either.

"No no, I mean, apart from us nobody knows who Liselotte or Siegward are. They'll have no idea what you're going on about."

Of course, you could say whatever you wanted, but I'm not so sure shouting through a school about video game characters was a great idea.

Then again, there was one guy who yelled about his 'waifu' last year. So, maybe there's a precedent.

"Mmmm, then, I'll turn it into a radio drama! I just need to make a script!"

However, after swiftly giving up on the 【Get It Off Your Chest!】 event, Kobayashi-san cracked onto another idea.

The other portion of the Broadcasting Club's school festival activities was decided on being a radio drama, but there wasn't a script yet.

Even with November fast approaching, it seemed like everyone has been procrastinating on it.

"Eh? Wait, hold up. You're really going to...? Seriously?"

Just how was she going to perform in a radio drama about it when just the idea of those two together had her bouncing off the walls?

When I thought that, Kobayashi-san suddenly turned around as if she'd finally calmed down properly, and looked at me.

"...Wait a minute, that might actually be a little embarrassing, right?"

Not just a little.



“Well, I mean, putting aside that I’m not sure you’d be able to calm down for the whole thing, there’s also the problem that if anyone was going to have to play the heroine, Liselotte, it would have to be you, Kobayashi-san...”

When I pointed that out to her as calmly as I could, Kobayashi-san suddenly seemed like she’d thought of something.

“Mmm... Then, does that mean Endo-kun would have to play Sieg?”

“Well... if Kobayashi-san was playing the part of Liselotte... then, I’d do it.”

Or rather, if Kobayashi-san decided to go ahead with this and play Liselotte, there’s no chance in hell I’d let anyone play Sieg.

It would be ridiculously embarrassing, but that’s beside the point.

“...Kuu... That’d be a problem...!”

“What’s the problem now!?”

Kobayashi-san was suddenly holding her hands in her head like she was troubled as I played the straight man.

Just as I was fearing that maybe she wanted someone else to play the Sieg to her Liselotte, Kobayashi-san finally raised her head and spoke.

“No, I really do like your voice, Endo-kun. It’s low, but gentle. Soft, but it carries weight. Even before you were in the broadcasting club I was hoping to get you to say some sickly sweet lines into a recorder so I could play them on an endless loop or something like that~. Actually, I’m still thinking about that.

Kobayashi-san’s expression was deadly serious.

No, well, if you just want me to say that I love you, Kobayashi-san, I can say that whenever you want. Is what I thought, but obviously I was still too much of a wuss to say it.

The Prince and the Villainess made it look so easy just now, though. Once again, those guys really are something.

“Well, y’know, remember the sports tournament recently, Endo-kun? All the girls were telling you that you had such a good voice, right? It made me realize that I’m not the only fan of Endo-kun’s voice out there... seriously just how much demand is there...?”

At Kobayashi-san’s straight ball, I could only glance awkwardly to the side as I mumbled back an answer.

“Kobayashi-san, everyone said that your voice was really beautiful as well...”

As she picked up my mutter, Kobayashi-san let out a slightly embarrassed laugh.

Of course, Kobayashi-san was someone who was truly popular, since she had such a great personality on top of being pretty. Meanwhile, the only thing I had going for me was my voice.

“It was fun, huh~? The sports tournament.”

As Kobayashi-san smiled at me, I remembered that sports tournament from just a couple of weeks ago.

---

Half a month ago, at the end of September, Kobayashi-san and I provided the commentary for the final of the men's basketball tournament.

That said, it wasn't something decided long in advance.

Apparently, the club advisor suddenly decided 'you two are good, take over the final' after watching the two of us always taking and joking about something, though he had no idea it was an otome game, so we found ourselves in the box seat at the gymnasium on really short notice.

"Welcome welcome welcome! It's finally begun, the long awaited final of the men's basketball! With class 1-3 up against 2-5, there's been a shock with all the senior classes going out early! Who will claim supremacy now!? With the Play-By-Play, I... my name is Endo, and..."

"I, Kobayashi, will be handling the colour commentary."

Our chaotic off-the-cuff commentary that started from that point on actually turned out to be surprisingly popular.

We're only amateurs and didn't have much time to prepare, so there were a few times where I fell behind, but when that happened Kobayashi-san would always chime in to help me get back on track.

"Wow, you two were really good! You both really got into it, huh!?"

It was like I was listening to a married couple's comedy routine at times!"

That was just what one of my classmates said to me, but apparently that was the impression a lot of people got.

Since we were so lively in our commentary for a finals match that half the school had come to see, the two of us as well as the broadcasting club got a lot of attention.

At around the same time, the rumour that 'Endo and Kobayashi in the broadcasting club are an item' started spreading through the school so fast it seemed like even the teachers knew about it.

Apparently that was because we sounded so 'perfect' together during the commentary but, sadly, it wasn't the truth at all.

In fact, I'm worried that things might get awkward between us because of that annoying rumour, and the other members of the broadcasting club who know how I feel have been getting pushy, saying 'What? You haven't confessed yet?' constantly.

I'd hate it if Kobayashi-san suddenly started acting differently around me because of that rumour, but thankfully she seems the same. In fact, she didn't even seem embarrassed at all when we fell over together like that...

Our current relationship is good, and I don't want a rumour or something stupid I do or say to ruin it...  
Ah, jeez, I really do envy that Prince's courage.

## **[An Avalanche of Sugar]**

Kobayashi-san really did end up proposing a radio show based around MagiKoi.

Of course, every single other member of the committee stood opposed and rejected it with everything they had.

‘There are only two main characters though, so it would be hard for everyone to be involved, wouldn’t it?’ was the understandable reason used to oppose the proposal of Kobayashi, the most talkative person in the club who had become something of its idol lately, but for some reason everyone else’s annoyances were vented towards me instead.

“Stop using the cultural festival to flirt in public!”

“She’s hyped up on ‘sugar’ right now, so please give me a break about it.”

“I was wondering why the atmosphere in the club room has gotten so sickly sweet lately...”

“Oi, you sure you’re really not dating?”

“Die in a fire, you idiot couple. No, rather, *Shihonon* can live and be my bride instead.”

I’m still not really sure why the third years decided to pile on me like that.

In particular, the club president said that I should die in a fire alone, whilst ‘Shihonon’ went with her instead.

“Seriously, we aren’t dating...”

Anyways, senpai, if you look at it rationally, do you really think Kobayashi-san sees me like that?”

When I asked them that, those senpai couldn’t look me in the eye.

“Well, I mean, I don’t think she hates you, at least? Ah, not like Shihonon hates anybody, but... y’know...”

I agreed with the club president. She doesn’t hate me. At least, that’s what I think.

The problem is going further than that. What did everyone else think?

As I tried to look each of my senpai in the eye, they desperately tried to avoid my glance, until the club president finally got flustered, then she shouted at me.

“Uuu.... I’m not gonna tell you! Hurry up and confess! Then get dumped! You jeeeeerck!!”

With that, the president ran away with tears in her eyes.

Eventually, with the help of the teacher managing the club, it was decided that the radio drama would be about a murder mystery taking place on a remote island in two parts, giving people the opportunity to make their guesses on who the culprit was and potentially win a prize if they were right.

By the way, the part I played was the murder victim who died a few minutes in. I was fine with only having a few lines, but I could feel the murderous intent from the president when she assigned me to that role.

Meanwhile, Kobayashi-san played as the serious and diligent heroine and assistant to the detective.

The role felt like a bit of a departure from what she's usually like, but at least she didn't die like I did.

---

The day of the cultural festival eventually arrived.

The duties for the broadcasting club over the school festival were split between two different rooms; the usual club room being used to broadcast the radio drama, as well as a classroom we were leant to accept entries for the 'Get it Off Your Chest!' program. However...

Whilst the radio drama was being done in private, this part of the festival involved being face to face with the public, which not everyone was comfortable with doing. 'Since the two of you are basically celebrities already, it should be fine for you guys' was the reasoning Kobayashi-san and I were given for why it was hoisted on us in the end.

Of course, we'd get someone to replace us around lunchtime, but I was beginning to get slightly irritated because of a mixture of hunger and impatience with having to interfere every time someone started trying to hit on Kobayashi-san. Well, not to say I wouldn't do that all day if I had to, but that's another story.

After seeing off one guest, there would be another and then another, it seemed like an endless stream. It was then I noticed that the next guest who entered the classroom was a young woman.

I couldn't help but stare a little bit as I watched that beautiful woman with the long and slender legs emerging from her fashionable culotte skirt gaze around the room as if she were looking for something in particular, as her lightly coloured hair that was loosely curled bobbed slightly on her head.

"Shihono!"

Then, she suddenly burst into a big smile as she called out to Kobayashi-san with a happy voice.

Kobayashi-san, who was talking to a couple of junior-high girls who were talking about their plans for high school next year, turned to look at the woman who had suddenly called out her name.

"...Onee-chan!?"

Kobayashi-san looked gobsmacked as that young woman flashed her a mischevious grin.

"Here I am~"

As Kobayashi-san stared at her in astonishment, I realized that this must be her sister who had come to visit.

“What do you mean ‘here I am’!? You didn’t have to come at all... Ah, sorry!”

Kobayashi-san apologized to the junior high students who looked a little taken aback at the interruption.

“Ah... I’ll tap in. Kobayashi-san, you can go and talk to your sister if you like?”

As I got up and intervened, the junior-high girls looked relieved, but for some reason, Kobayashi-san looked sulky.

“Hmm... hey, you, are you Shihono’s boyfriend?”

Her sister suddenly asked me such a thing with an unreadable expression on her face.

“Uh, no, my name is Endo Aoto, I’m a member of the broadcasting club. I’m indebted to your sister... for showing me the ropes in the club.”

As I bowed my head, Kobayashi-san’s sister rubbed her chin as if she were thinking about something.

“Endo-kun...? Ah, that’s right, the Endo from back during summer vacat-”

With a sudden burst of energy, Kobayashi-san leapt forward and clamped her hand over her sister’s mouth.

“Uhh... um, yeah. During the summer vacation, I was a guest at the Kobayashi home a few times...”

Or, rather, I spent half the summer break there.

As I thought about how I’d never actually met this older sister of hers in all the time I spent there, Kobayashi-san gave me a strange smile as she kept her hand plastered over her sister’s mouth.

“Now now, let’s not get too stuffy with greetings, okay? Thanks, Endo-kun. I’ll just have a quick chat with Onee-chan for a moment. Ah, no matter how cute those two are, don’t try any funny business, okay?”

Kobayashi-san kept talking as she forcibly started to push her older sister out of the classroom with her, not even giving her a single opportunity to talk.

Does she really think I’d hit on junior high students, though... Ah, well, I guess next year they’ll be first years whilst I’ll be a third-year, huh? But, still, I only have eyes for Kobayashi-san...

As I thought about that, I made a mental note to reassure Kobayashi-san that not all men were quite as bad as the guys who kept trying out pick up lines on her today.

Just before Kobayashi-san left the classroom with her sister, that sister of hers gave me a happy look with her eyes alone, as if she’d seen right through me.

---

“Heya, Endo-kuuun.”

Although Kobayashi-san had told me she'd driven her sister away, here she was suddenly calling out to me.

"Ah, hello... Kobayashi-san... umm, I mean, Shihono-san is in the club room right now."

It was lunch break now. Since our shift was over and we'd been relieved, we were going to have lunch in the club room, although I had gone out alone to buy the food.

I told her that since I assumed she had something more to talk about with her sister, but she shook her head.

"Nah, if Shihono saw me right now, she'd just get mad again. Actually, if she found out I was still in the school at all, I don't think I'd hear the end of it."

Kobayashi-san's big sister shrugged as she said that. I guess Kobayashi-san shows her strict side around her family?

Well, not like I'm one to say anything since I guess I have the same kind of relationship with my parents and sisters.

"Umm, then, did you have something to discuss with me?"

When I asked her that slightly nervously, big sister Kobayashi nodded.

"Yeah. All through summer vacation, Shihono told me not to be at home during the day on pain of death as she hung out with some guy, so as her big sis I sorta gotta be worried, ya know?"

Her sister suddenly asked me that. So I guess the very intentional way Kobayashi-san always said that 'my sister won't be coming home today' whenever I came over and the fact she never did before I left wasn't a coincidence at all.

But, the way she said it made it sound like something really dirty was going on, when in fact the only thing we were doing was trying to support the love of two other people with all our hearts. The only reason Kobayashi-san desperately wanted to keep it a secret was because of the strange nature of the game itself.

"Ah, well, it's not what it looks like..."

As I tried to think of a good excuse, her big sister stared me down.

"Hmmm? Endo-kun, are you saying you're not interested in my little sis at all?"

As that scary expression on her face seemed to signal that she had seen right through me, I felt deeply uncomfortable by the fact that I was being read by an open book despite only just having met Kobayashi-san's sister.

"It's not that I'm not interested, it's just that I wonder if she feels the same way..."

As I muttered that bitterly, Kobayashi-san's sister evil grin just became wider as she prodded me to continue.

“Well, you’ve already guessed it, but I really do like her. She’s insanely cute, like she’s some kind of angel, both her looks and personality are totally my type. It’s like, I’m crazy in love with her, I really love her a lot.”

I heaved a sigh as I confessed it. But, if I’m going to be honest, I think Kobayashi-san loves Liselotte way more than she does me. If I was special to her in any way, then it’s just as a way to help Liselotte.

“Oho ho hooo... I see, I see, but y’know, that Shiho-” **“ONEEEEE-CHAAAAAAN!!”**

Her words were cut off as she wheeled around in surprise to see Kobayashi-san charging down the hall towards us with a shout.

“Onee-chan... I, I told you to quit it, didn’t I!?”

Kobayashi-san hissed angrily at her sister.

“Ah, yeah. Sorry.”

Her sister replied with a slight trembling in her voice.

Kobayashi-san was quietly fuming as she glared at her sister. But, I guess she stayed quiet since there were a few people looking our way now.

Actually, hang on, just where did she come from...? She didn’t hear everything I said about love just then, right? Or about her being an angel...?

“Sorry about that, Endo-kun My sister didn’t say anything weird just now, did she?”

As I began to feel a cold sweat trickle down my back, Kobayashi-san suddenly turned to me.

“Ah, actually, we uh, we only just started talking. We didn’t really get a chance to speak, right?”

I sent a meaningful glance to her sister, who started nodding furiously.

“Yeah, honestly, I was actually just about to head back! Um, I, I just mentioned how I’m an alumni here... that’s all I said, didn’t I!?”

We were making up a lie on the spot, but I nodded just as furiously as she had at her words.

“Ah, now that you mention it... Onee-chan went to the same high school as us, but she also goes to the same university as Kuon Kirise!”

Kobayashi-san seemed quite proud as she said that with a big smile.

“Uh... that’s amazing! You’re amazing, big sis!”

Obviously, I would take any excuse to change the topic quickly, so I jumped on it full force.

“That’s right, I’m pretty amazin’! Nah, but really, our university is huge, so I’ve never really had the opportunity to meet him though?”

Seems like big sis wasn’t going to let the opportunity go either.

The truth was that our high school wasn’t particularly advanced, so for someone who went here to be able to attend one of the top three universities in Kanto is pretty amazing.



Now that they mention it, Kuon, a character based on Kuon Kirise's likeness, appears during the autumn if the player is on the Sieghard route, after Liselotte is possessed by the Ancient Witch and immediately after Baldur loses his life.

He doesn't show up in the reverse harem route either, but since the scene where he'd show up normally shouldn't come to pass, I wonder just what he'll do?

As I watched the Kobayashi sisters get fired up, I found myself wondering.

## **Much Ado About Dresses**

“Prince Siegward and Liselotte Onee-sama... just the other day, you two were actually able to finally understand each other’s feelings... right?”

A few moments after Liselotte fled wildly from the parlour, slamming the door behind her, Finne asked me that question with a dubious look on her face.

“That’s what I thought, but who really knows?”

I grimaced a little as I responded to Liselotte’s little sister, who gave me a similar smile in return.

“Well, it’s definitely no lie that things have gotten a little... sweeter...? When it’s just the two of us, at least. But, when there’s someone else, it’s like nothing much has changed... Or rather, could she actually be getting worse...? Well, it’s not as if I’m going to stop trying to be close to her just because she gets so shy... besides, it’s really adorable, so isn’t it fine?”

Listening to my words, Finne nodded in agreement with a satisfied looking smile on her face.

“Yeah, an always calm and composed Onee-sama wouldn’t really be Onee-sama at all, would she? But... what exactly should we do about the dresses now?”

Today was Thanksgiving and, although there was still some time before the Autumn Ball, I had come to the Riefenstahl household to help Liselotte pick out her dress.

Although Liselotte had been with us in the parlour just moments ago, the moment Finne and I both suggested trying on dresses for the ball, Liselotte fled.

“Hmm... Well, if she won’t even let us prepare it, there’s no way she’s going to wear it... it’s kind of sad, huh...?”

Liselotte was adamant in insisting that, on the day of the ball, she wouldn’t wear a dress but instead wanted to wear something more athletic, after hearing the prophecy of the Gods that stated that the Ancient Witch would appear on that night.

Since this was the last time we would be able to participate together in the autumn ball as students, I pleaded with that I desperately wanted to see my cute fiancée in a dress, with Finne nodding right alongside me in agreement, but as we did Liselotte turned a deep shade of red and pushed past us to escape.

“Wouldn’t it be fine if she wore a dress that was easy to move around in? If we get rid of both the train and the petticoat and pull the hem of the dress slightly above the ankle... No, maybe even shorter than that?”

“Indeed...

We would also need to make sure that the dress is loose fitting enough not to restrict her movement, as well as her footwork...?”

『Eh, now that I think about it, won’t fighting in high heels be really hard as well?』

『I don't think Rize-tan would take it well if people see the hem of her dress get dirty because of a fight outdoors, either.』

As I discussed the dress with Finne, Coebayashay and Endow's voice suddenly broke in between us.

If they're here, does that mean Liselotte has returned as well?

*Knock knock knock...*

"Excuse my intrusion."

With a final knock, it was Baldur who spoke at the same time he opened the door. He must have been the one who brought the Gods with him.

"Oh, Bard-senpai...? Ah, I get it. Onee-sama told you to come here because she didn't want us two to be alone together, right?"

Baldur silently nodded at Finne's question.

The estate of Marquis Riefenstahl and that of the Viscount from the branch family in the capital are adjacent to each other, but they are separate properties.

I'm sure that Liese must have rushed across the road and then sent Baldur running over here like that.

"Um, Lies-... Liselotte also asked me to ask Your Highness if she could be lent a uniform of a female royal guard?"

Baldur, who had been strictly banned from using Liselotte's nickname, walked over to my side to relay her question.

『Royal guard...? Wait, what kind of clothes are those?』

As Endow asked that question with a puzzled tone of voice, Coebayashay suddenly sounded quite excited.

『It's a military uniform! It's a white uniform with gold on top! I remember that you sometimes saw those guards with the characters from the royal family, and the embroidery and buttons on their clothes looked really expensive!』

"They have long wide-legged pants, but the woman's uniform also has longer sleeves than the men's and has a parting in the back of the jacket... is that right?"

As Finne asked that, I nodded slightly, but noticed that Baldur did almost the exact same movement simultaneously. I felt a little awkward.

But, just as I urged him to go and sit down next to Finne, Coebayashay's voice suddenly boomed.

『Let's do that! I wanna see a uniformed Rize-tan!! Cross-dressing...! Well, not quite, but I absolutely have to see this cool rare version of Rize-tan!!』

This isn't commentary, it's just a demand, isn't it...? Well, I'm not going to lie and say I'm not interested in seeing Liese in uniform. I will humbly follow the Goddess' instructions.

“Well, I don’t see why not? It’s made to be easy to fight in and it shouldn’t be an issue to attend an event like a ball wearing something that finely made... I’ll have one lent to her, or at least tailored to Liese’s size.”

As I said that, Finne nodded happily whilst Baldur didn’t do a good job of hiding his sigh of relief. Just what exactly did my fiancée say to him?

“...Finne, will you be wearing the same?”

Suddenly, Baldur asked his sweetheart Finne that question. Come to think of it, we hadn’t talked at all about what Finne would wear, since both she and I were so focused on how Liselotte would be dressed.

“No... Unlike Onee-sama, long pants like that wouldn’t really fit me at all... And, I mean, if I stand next to Onee-sama wearing the same uniform, I’d look silly compared to her... More importantly, white and gold are Your Highness’ colours, so I definitely won’t!”

For some reason, Finne suddenly looked flustered.

『To think that Liselotte’s dere side would come out in such a waaaaay!?!』

『So it wasn’t just about wearing the same sort of uniform that Rizepapa and Baldur would, naturally she was conscious about Sieg as well.』

The Gods quickly realized what Finne meant as they praised Liselotte’s cuteness in my ear.

Was I thinking the same way? Of course.

“Ah... Well, Miss Finne, did you want to wear the kind of dress I mentioned earlier?”

I forced myself to keep the conversation going with a light smile, as I felt my face twisting into something strange the longer that silence dragged on, whilst Finne turned around at my voice. Looking like she was pondering for a moment, she finally began to speak.

“Hmm... No, I think I need to wear something that’s more comfortable for my fighting style, but... What should I do... Maybe a looser pair of pants, but are maybe much shorter than Onee-sama’s... something like that...?”

『Like a young noble boy’s pants...? Arabian style...? Like a pirate, even...? Actually, if they were puffier, maybe like a magical girl’s...?』

Coebayashay ruminated over Finne’s words, muttering phrases I couldn’t even begin to understand the meaning of with a deadly serious voice.

I wonder if she’s just thinking aloud? Or are these a new series of requests from the Goddess to see Finne try on certain styles of clothing?

『But, in the same, didn’t she wear a below knee-length dress with boots? That should be fine, right?』

『Ah, yeah, that was cute too, huh?』

Coebayashay didn’t seem particularly enthusiastic about it compared to before, but nonetheless she still agreed with Endow’s words.

“Then, let’s go with that. A commoner’s dress with magical hand-to-hand fighting adjustments... something like that!”

Finne seemed happy with that idea. That being said, I had absolutely no idea what she meant.

Well, it’s not as if I have any say in the design of her dress. Finne had made a request for the Riefenstahl family’s personal tailor to come to their home today for Liselotte’s sake, but now... Well, I wish you good luck, Mister Tailor.

“Even though it is supposed to be a formal wear ball, only students, faculty and assigned staff can actually attend the ball, no? I think it should be fine if the dress is slightly casual.”

Finne looked relieved at my words.

That being said, I don’t think there’s a single person who would dare talk badly about Finne behind her back now.

At the beginning of the semester, there were quite a few people who, angry about a commoner attending school with them, spread vulgar rumours about Finne’s background, but a lot of that stopped after I made it clear we were friends and Liselotte also decided to do something about it herself. Liselotte’s efforts bore fruit after the summer vacation when the fact that the two of them had become sisters became known to everyone.

What’s more, Finne began to gather a lot of friends of her own because of her ability and how approachable she was, and of course, the fact that she was now daughter to a Marquis helped. So, maybe she could become a trendsetter... Maybe that commoner’s dress with magical hand-to-hand fighting adjustments of hers could become popular? Even if I have no idea what that is.

“Well, I suppose if the style has already been settled on, all that’s left is for the both of you to discuss what colours you’ll be wearing. As for me, I think I’m going to go and check on Liselotte.”

As I stood up and turned to leave, I caught a glimpse of those two looking into each other’s eyes with awkward smiles.

『Liselotte is... Ah, that was easy, she’s sulking in her room as you’d expect.』

As I heard the words of Endow, who must be able to see where she was, a wry smile spread across my face. Let’s hurry up and see her, then.

『Seeing Rize-tan and cheering her up is more important than watching Baru and Finne get all lovey-dovey. Please hurry over to her room.』

“W-We aren’t being lovey-dovey at all!”

Hearing Coebayashay’s words, Finne suddenly shouted as her face turned a bright shade of red, but Baldur who couldn’t hear the words of the Goddess had a deeply sad expression on his face.

“Just what happened...? Are you turning into... Liselotte...?”

As Baldur slowly asked that question, Finne’s blush somehow intensified and her mouth hung agape.

Certainly, taken at face value it would seem like she doesn't want to act lovey-dovey with him at all, but if we apply the same Soon d'Rey lens that I use for Liselotte, then isn't she just saying that she doesn't want to act lovey-dovey in front of others?

If that's the case, as the one intruding I should make myself scarce and leave quickly.

I left that parlour as quickly as I could.

## **No Such Thing as Overkill**

A week after Thanksgiving, the halls of the academy were sparse of people in the waning hours of the day.

I, who had received the divine prophecy of the Gods, along with Liselotte and her father Marquis... or, I suppose in this context, General Riefenstahl, accompanied by several of his handpicked men.

“First of all, can we truly confirm that this is the courtyard where this ‘Ancient Witch’ is supposed to manifest itself?”

『This is definitely the place. This courtyard is where it’ll come out, or rather, from the ruins underground where the witch is sealed.』

Coebayashay responded to the voice of General Riefenstahl... but, of course, Liselotte and her father couldn’t hear her words at all, so I relayed the information.

“According to the prophecy, the ruins that have sealed away the Ancient Witch lie beneath our very feet. There’s no room for doubt.”

“Then with that being the case, this area is definitely spacious enough to set up a large formation of knights...”

“No, we need to prepare for the possibility that the witch might flee to other parts of the Academy or take a hostage. Shouldn’t we assign some of the soldiers to other parts of the campus to protect the staff and students?”

“The teachers in the school are considered amongst the most distinguished mages in the country, not to mention that the academy’s security members are also very seasoned. We shouldn’t have to divert too many resources...”

Liselotte, General Riefenstahl and I considered discussing matters in detail for quite some time.

As a result, it was eventually decided that the group that would stay in the courtyard would be Art, who according to the Gods was also a so-called ‘capture target’, Baldur, Fabian and, of course, myself. Finne, the girl the Gods called the ‘heroine’, would stand shoulder to shoulder with the ‘villainess’, Liselotte. Along with the characters who were present when the Ancient Witch was cast down in the God’s ‘game’, there are also twelve elite knights who will accompany us, comprising the best of the best the Order has to offer.

『Hey, uh, isn’t this a little overkill...? I mean, I’m pretty sure that Finne is strong enough to solo clear, right...?』

As our battle formation was being settled, Endow sounded a little uneasy as he chimed in.

『There’s no such thing as overkill when it comes to this! Since the Ancient Witch is a creature that feeds on people’s misery and pain to grow stronger, our best bet is to hit it full force and crush it the moment it decides to show up! ...Probably? And remember, even in the solo clear route, Rize-tan still gets possessed and Baldur ends up dying as well. It’s absolutely necessary to bring as much strength to the fight as we can so that everyone can survive! .....Probably?』

Coebayashay was quite passionate in her rebuttal to Endow, but no matter how softly she spoke, that ‘probably’ word she likes to use at times like these cropped up twice. Somehow, I get the feeling that word betrayed the Goddess’ lack of confidence.

『Doesn’t this just feel like bullying at this point...?』

『N-no way! Because, uh, we gave up on Leon, right!? And more importantly... wasn’t the witch the one who bullied Rize-tan first? This witch made the whole country her enemy when she tried to pick on our adorable future Queen, Rize-tan! Yes, that’s it!』

She was right.

I nodded in deep affirmation at Coebayashay’s sage divine mandate.

Suddenly, I heard a name I didn’t expect in the midst of the conversation Liselotte and her father were having and I couldn’t help but interject.

“Wait, Miss Cecilie will be participating as well?”

I thought I must have misheard them, but the two nodded in unison.

“Yes, Cecilie recently passed the advanced chivalric examination with flying colours. She’s still only considered an apprentice knight, just like Baldur, but she’s been included with the twelve selected knights as Fabian’s escort.”

I couldn’t hide my bewilderment at Liselotte’s words.

The advanced examination was not the regular method of recruiting prospective knights, but instead a series of battles against five different full-fledged knights. If the examinee manages to win a majority of their duels, and the King approves, they’re made an apprentice knight with a view of potentially being fast-tracked into the royal guard once their training is complete.

“But she’s the youngest daughter of the Riefenstahl house, and she’s only just turned 10 years old as well... Just what on earth is my father thinking...?”

『I-it’s pretty amazing that she’s been included in the top 12 knights.』

『Rizepapa mentioned before that the 12 people he chose were all strong both ‘mentally and physically’, right? Even putting the 12-year-old Fabian-kyun aside, it’s amazing that a 10-year-old is strong enough to be selected... Especially when it comes to being mentally strong.』

As I stood in stunned silence, Endow and Coebayashay’s words echoed in my ears.

“No, that daughter of mine insisted on taking the exam herself, His Majesty is not at fault. Please accept my deepest apologies for her selfishness on my behalf. However, if that daughter of mine wishes to stay by Fabian’s side, she will inevitably encounter many dangers throughout her life... or, rather, she’s so addicted to fighting that she may well welcome the opportunity to fight any and all challengers. I can guarantee her strength, and should she be killed, this was the path she chose for herself.”



As I was still digesting the words of the Gods, I finally found my voice again at General Riefenstahl's cold words.

"But, that's... Uh, rather, did Miss Cecilie agree to become his fiancée?"

As I was wondering whether or not this decision of hers was spurred out of a desire to protect him for that reason, Liselotte nodded.

"The engagement has almost been finalized, I believe? Fabian is still slightly confused about all this, but Cecilie seems very determined for whatever reason. Apparently, she's always dreamed of 'marrying the strongest man in the world'... Honestly, my goodness, *just where* does she get this romanticism from? What's more, of course, she's even saying now that 'I'll definitely marry Fabian and protect him for the rest of my life, and if I can't, I'll just die'... To be blunt, I never imagined that girl would be so passionate about such a thing, it truly is a surprise."

As I stood agape, wondering just what kind of 10-year-old girl would say things like that, said girl's father, General Riefenstahl, spoke with an exhausted sounding sigh.

"I suppose it's the curse of parenthood to think that their children will rely on them forever. When they're born, they're so tiny and cute, but even though that feels like it only happened yesterday, before we know it they're already leaving our side... It's certainly a lonely feeling, but it's simply the way of things. Although the twins still play in the yard like girls their age, they're already talking about not letting their younger sister Cecilie get ahead of them... Well, I suppose if you look back at our family history, we've always been like *this*."

Shading his eyes with his hand so that only I could see them, the General made a distinct look before letting it drop back down by his side.

『I suppose it's true that, if you use Rize-tan as a measuring stick, the members of the Riefenstahl family are always passionate and serious.』

I struggled to suppress a laugh, as Coebayashay's words coincided perfectly with the hidden eye jerk towards Liselotte that the General had just shown me.

"Liese, now that I think about it, you were about 10 years old when you fell in love with me as well, right?"

"Wha...!?"

Liese stammered at my sudden attack, but the General chimed in with a nod.

"Ah, that's right, back then Liese was so infatuated with you that if anyone tried to take you away, she probably would have tried to kill them herself and then die. Cecilie is really the spitting image of the cute Liese from back then, truly. I have to say, I was getting quite frustrated by the fact that Liese couldn't accept that a daughter of mine would show such a similar *passion*... I'm truly grateful to Your Highness for pointing it out to her."

『In the game, she really did turn into a villainess who tried to kill the heroine and died in the process, though!』

『Well, Rize-tan never seriously hurt Finne with her harassment in the game, but the bullying was still quite cruel. It was the sort of game where either the heroine or her rival would end up dead in the end, though. Of course, that was all because of her love for Your Highness.』

The words of the General, the Play-By-Play Commentator and the Colour Commentator As I listened to all three of them explain just how deep Liselotte's love went, I was left with a warm feeling in my chest.

“In that case, I'm really thankful that we came to understand each other. Thank you for loving me up until now, Liese.”

As I took the hand of Liselotte, who had become frozen stiff, and softly placed my lips on it, I looked up to see her mouth twisting painfully as she desperately tried to stammer out a reply.

“Uuu... I...”

Her eyes that gazed back at me began to swim... but, after a couple of furious blinks, she shot me a harsh glare.

“...Your Highness!!”

As I held my nerve in the face of her stern stare, I wondered if I had gone a touch too far considering that her father was standing right there, but Liselotte managed to continue.

“Just now... Your Highness, you said ‘up until now’, however... Could I ask you not to make light of my feelings in such a way! Even if Your Highness may one day change his mind, I will love you until the end of my days, not just ‘until now’! No matter what manner of ploys or tricks Your Highness or others may use, it will not matter to me! I will never yield my place by your side!”

『A five-star tsungire performance, Liselotte!』

『Even though she used whatever means she had at her disposal, Rize-tan never used violence or ambushes. The only time she really lashed out with force was when she was possessed by the Ancient Witch. She would always face her foe from the front.』

Ahh, jeez, I can't take it.

“...Wha!? Um, what are you... Sto-!?”

Liselotte's words were too cute, and the live commentary only made it doubly so.

Without a word, I stood up and drew Liselotte into a hug, despite her yelps of confusion.

“Wait just a moment, my father and his guards are... C-could you please calm down!?”

Even though Liselotte sounded like she was about to push me away at any moment, she didn't resist at all as I heard the General's voice from behind us.

“Your Highness, I'll receive this as my cue to take my leave. I'll proceed to the security station and make arrangements with the head of campus security and my knights. We shall reconvene later!”

As I turned to look at the general, I already saw him turning his cloak and hurrying off with his men as quickly as he could.

“Oh, as a father, you aren’t going to intervene?”

When I called out to him without thinking, the General stopped in his tracks for just a moment as he wheeled around to face me.

“It’s good for the country’s sake that His Highness and my daughter are so close! Besides, I hugged Liese as much as I liked before she was five years old!”

Ahh, now that I mention it, I do recall the General complaining to my father at a banquet a few years ago that although he had four daughters, not one of them had ever said that they wanted to ‘marry papa when they grow up’...

Everyone consoled him with words like ‘just give it up, that’s how daughters are’ and ‘you’ll forget all about it once you have grandchildren to dote over’.

“Y-Your Highness...! H-hot! It’s much too hot!!”

As Liese began to struggle gently in my arms, there was something in her words that frustrated me, so I spoke out in a way that sliced through her cries.

““Sieg.””

Although that was all I said, Liselotte suddenly stopped moving.

“Hey, Liese, at least when we’re alone... actually, even in public, I want you to call me ‘Sieg’.”

I’ve actually asked her to call me by that name time and time again. But, my fiancée constantly refused, saying that it would be too embarrassing to refer to me so informally.

Of course, seeing her get flustered as she refused me was cute as well, but at least when it’s just the two of us, I’d like to see her being a little more honest...

“It’s... embarrassing, and I feel like my heart is going to leap from my chest, so don’t take my hand so suddenly... Sieg.”

She finally called my name for the first time. It was the first time we had shared words as equals.

Hiding my momentary grin in the crook of her neck, I slowly and reluctantly let her go.

As I began to draw away from Liselotte, that relieved expression of hers made me feel slightly lonely. I was suddenly aware just how cavernous even the slightest distance between us felt. So, I...

*Chuu*

Before I left her side completely, I changed the direction and planted a soft kiss on her lips.

“....Mmmmmphhh!? S-Sieeg!?”

As I finally drew away, I smiled happily at the immensely adorable Liese, who cried out at me with tears in her eyes.

The only thing on my mind as I laughed whilst she looked at me in bashful anger was that I loved her. I really, really love her.

As soon as the witch chose the girl the Goddess called 'Our adorable Rize-tan' as her target, it made bitter enemies of both myself and this entire country. Coebayashay was definitely right about what she said before.

There's no such thing as overkill. I'll destroy that thing with every last drop of power I can bring to bear against it.

## On Winter's Doorstep

“I-I am supposed to be here as Your Highness’ guard today... Since I am wearing a uniform like this that’s not suitable for dancing, I... don’t want to bring shame to you... so, umm...”

As I hooked my hand around Liese’s waist as she tried to retreat with a bashful smile, I pulled her closer and whispered softly in her ear.

“Liese, no matter what you’re wearing, you’ll always be the most beautiful girl in the world.

Your uniform is so refreshing and cute, and this is the last time we can spend the Thanksgiving ball together as students. Will you please grant me another memory of you to treasure?”

『Liselotte bluuuuuuushed! Has Sieg finally made a breakthrough in this tense battle that has been raging back and forth!?!』

『She’s inches away from being swept off her feet, but admitting it would be a loss. But since she isn’t really refusing to dance out of a concern for etiquette but instead because of her own deep embarrassment, Rize-tan should just give up and accept it. In the game, Finne-chan and Rize-tan shared a dance during the reverse-harem route, you can already see some partners of the same gender dancing already. There shouldn’t be any problems for Rize-tan to dance in a military uniform.』

Casting a gaze around the ballroom floor as Coebayashay spoke, sure enough, there were definitely several members of the same sex happily dancing with one another.

As I did, I began to burst with the feeling that I wanted to dance with Liese in the midst of all of them to show off my cute fiancée to everyone. I bet it would be really fun.

『Ah, that’s right. Before entering the hall, Rize-tan had turned to Finne-chan, who was looking really worried about the prospect of her first public dance, and said ‘Now then, it’s time to show me the fruits of your labour’. Those two sure have been practising a lot at home, haven’t they?』

I can’t accept being outdone like that.

I instantly seized upon the words that Coebayashay had extolled from the heavens.

“So, you’re comfortable dancing with Finne, but I suppose that in the end, I’m no good...?”

I relaxed the strength in my arms as I stared right into her eyes, speaking as plainly and honestly as I could.

“How... how do you know...? No, rather, that was just instruction, there was no deeper meaning to it... What’s more, tonight is supposed to mark the climactic battle against the enemy, so...”

『Wooooow~, she’s really doing her best to hold back from having fun, huh?』

『Remembering back now, during their final practice Rize-tan said to Finne-chan ‘Well, I suppose that’s a passing grade?’ And when Finne-chan got really happy about that, there really was this yuri-yuri feeling in the air, wasn’t there?』

As I heard both Liese's excuses and the revelations of the Goddess, I narrowed my eyes slightly at Liese as she diverted her gaze. Perhaps she was a little self-conscious about the good mood she and her little sister were having before coming here...?

"You truly think that the witch will appear right here, right now...? And besides, like the proverb says, *'The last partner one will dance with during the festival of Thanksgiving shall be the partner who warms you through the winter'*... And, as it stands, won't that be Miss Finne for you, Liese? I can't abide by that..."

As she listened to my words, Liese couldn't meet my gaze.

The time of Thanksgiving was a festival where people expressed their gratitude to the Gods and Goddesses, especially the Goddess Lilena, for peace, prosperity and an abundant harvest. Depending on the region of the country and people's social class, the festival's date and length can vary, but the academy's ball was usually held closer to the beginning of the Thanksgiving festival days. It seems that it's almost a sort of dress rehearsal for the latter Thanksgiving ball that will be held at the royal palace.

Whilst Thanksgiving is about appreciating what has been gained over the year, especially in terms of a bountiful harvest, it is also about praying to the Gods for the strength to overcome the trials of the harsh winter months. Because of that, there were many people who believed wholeheartedly in the proverb I spoke about. Even if people may be having fun dancing with their friends now, they would put a great amount of care into who they would grant their last dance of the night.

"Uu... B-but, Finne is with Baldur now, so that shouldn't be an issue...?"

Liselotte mumbled those words, mixed with a sigh. She couldn't look me in the eye as she stared at her feet. There was something lonely and sad in the way her head drooped down.

"...Uu! I... I under... stand... So long as it's only a little bit, shall we dance...?"

Ah, after all, Liese really is kind-hearted. Even if she was doing everything in her power to resist doing it for her sake, she was still willing to dance for mine?

As she said those words I was so happy to hear with a reluctant voice, I burst into a smile.

"However, only a little bit!? Only a little bit, I say!?"

Without saying anything to Liese's slightly irritated sounding words, I took her hand and lead her towards the centre of the ballroom.

"There are some people who can't dance because they're waiting for us, so let's be quick now."

The Crown Prince and the daughter of the Marquis. In other words, Liese and I are the highest-ranking couple at the ball when it came to social status. Even if the faculty tried to stress that this wasn't a strictly formal affair, there were a lot of students who thought it would be too rude for them to start dancing before she and I began.

When she heard my words and noticed their gazes, Liese closed her mouth and nodded at my words, gracefully following my lead.

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The very moment the first song ended, Liese tried to make good on her promise of ‘just a little’ and immediately made to return to where we had been standing before, but I didn’t let go of her hand. Since Liese was determined not to do anything to embarrass me in public, she followed my lead when the music for the second dance began to play and matched my steps.

“Hey, Liese... are you really going to go to the courtyard?”

As we swayed back and forth to the slow melody of the song, I asked Liese a question I’d asked her many times these past few days.

“Of course. That Ancient Witch, I want to cut it down with my own two hands instead of cowering away in fear.”

Liese responded without a moment’s hesitation.

That had been her answer every time. Especially since the day had come, I couldn’t fight the feeling that I wanted Liese to be somewhere safe, but it seemed that it was to no avail.

“But, above all else... I wish to be able to stand by your side, always and to whatever end. In fact, having to wait here for you to return is far more terrifying to me than the prospect of facing that witch.”

As I wondered just how I could persuade her, Liese looked into my eyes and said that firmly in a way that left me no room to argue.

I suppose that’s right.

I wouldn’t be able to bear to stay somewhere safe if I knew Liese was in danger either.

Even if someone told me not to go because I was royalty, I’d ignore them and go to her side anyway.

I remembered her feelings and determination that had made me speechless so many times before and smiled.

“Then, let’s make sure that we face it hand in hand? Just like that day, the first time we met.”

“The first day we... met...?”

As I spoke with a smile, Liese tilted her head in obvious confusion.

She must not remember it, but I still have a memory of when she was five years old and we first met, I did take her hand.

The first day that I ever saw Liese, I hadn’t been told that we would be engaged. In fact, our engagement hadn’t yet been confirmed at all.

Things weren’t supposed to happen the way they did that day, but purely by chance, I was a little captivated by the adorable young girl I met, whose first words I heard from her mouth were ‘Prince’. She seemed so nervous, so I tried smiling to reassure her, but for some reason, I wanted to be closer with her as well, so I eventually took her hand in mine.

By the time we had grown up, Liese had become stronger and bolder, and I began to think that she didn't think very much of me at all.

Also, although our engagement wasn't formalized at all by that point, our respective families seeing my behaviour on that day decided to take the potential engagement much more seriously from then on.

The Liese in front of me now, who was furrowing her brows deeply as if she were scouring her memories, was also incredibly cute. Her long golden hair was swept back into a high ponytail that would help keep it out of the way during a fight, and there was something refreshingly cute about that guard uniform of hers.

Well, Liese is always cute no matter what she wears, of course.

But, if it weren't for Endow and Coebayashay, I really would have stayed completely oblivious to that.

So, even if she doesn't remember our first meeting together, that doesn't matter to me. Of course, I'd be happy if she remembered it just a little, though.

"It's no problem if you don't remember. But, although you were very cute as a young girl, Liese, I think you're much cuter now. And, of course, I'll never forget that."

When I smiled, Liese blushed so furiously I almost let out a laugh.

"Wha... wha... Ahhh, jeez!"

Liese, who was about to cry out in frustration, eventually just puffed up her cheeks in an adorable pout.

But, no matter how upset she was, she didn't miss a single step in her dance or slouch that elegant posture of hers even an inch.

"...I understand. Then, let's make sure to hold hands. I too... will be a little encouraged if we do that."

Although her face was a deep shade of red and she couldn't look right at me, Liese said that in a quiet voice.

"However, you must let me go when it begins, alright!? I'll be wielding my spear, so you must be sure to keep your distance, okay!?"

I couldn't help but smile as she tried to cover up her previous honesty with a furious torrent of words.

"Mm, yeah, I suppose it can't be helped today, can it?"

'But who knows what I might do in the future?' were the words I desperately wanted to say, but I couldn't tease her anymore when I saw that relieved look on her face.

When Thanksgiving was over, we would be on winter's doorstep. Those cold, harsh months.

I hoped that, during every day of that frigid winter, we could stay side by side.

As I gently squeezed her hand in mine, I never wanted to let her go.

The happiness that I had found intertwining her fingers with mine, I would never let it slip away again.





As I made that resolution in my mind, we continued to dance.

## **The Masked Man**

Liese and I, of course, danced the last dance together in the center of the ballroom floor.

She looked up at me slightly reproachfully as we did, but it didn't deter me at all.

The girls nearby seemed utterly fascinated by Liese's style of dress, so whilst all eyes were on us I wanted everyone to see how good our relationship was.

『Ahh~, what a sight for sore eyes. I really got to see something great. Now then, I guess it's about time, huh?』

As I listened to Coebayashay's satisfied sounding words, I glanced around the hall and caught Finne's eyes, who must have also heard her words as she nodded slightly with a smile.

Arm in arm with her partner, Baldur, she made her way towards where Liese and I were.

“Fabian and Cecilie are already in the courtyard, whilst my father and the other eleven knights are posted nearby.”

Liese, her hands still in mine, said that with a calm and cool voice.

The General had insisted that ‘outsiders aren't to be allowed into the ball venue’, so it was decided beforehand that the knights would be stationed around the courtyard.

“Fabian Ortenburg is already at the courtyard?”

I was a little confused with what Liese had said since that wasn't what we had agreed on earlier, but Baldur interjected.

“‘There's a girl who wanted to dance the last dance with me no matter what, so we decided to use the courtyard’, is what he said.”

『Really? What a man.』

『Woah, he really has a bright future ahead of him. As expected of Fabian-kyun.』

It seems like those two are getting along well. I breathed a secret sigh of relief.

Thank goodness, there's no reason for me to be anxious about Fabian and Liese's relationship from now on.

“Ahh, jeez, all these idiot couples wherever I look, huh? How the hell is this fair!?”

It was my best friend, Artur Richter, who yelled that out with an uncharacteristically frustrated sounding voice.

Because the Thanksgiving period is also considered a religious holiday, he was wearing his full black priestly uniforms, which clashed garishly with his sour-looking face and flashy rosy hair.

“You guys seem way too fluffy considering what we're here to do, y'know?”

As we began to walk towards the courtyard as a group, Art who was also a part of the team came running up to me.

“There are so many cute girls in this world! But no matter how many I try to chat up, I can never get a fluffy mood like what you’ve guys have got going on! Even Liselotte and Finne gave me the cold shoulder!!”

As Art lamented deeply, Liese glared at him as if she was staring at human garbage, whilst Finne slightly hid behind Baldur’s back with a disgusted sounding ‘woah...’.

“Considering how frivolously you consider Finne and myself, it is small wonder you can’t find your own partner.”

Liselotte didn’t hold back at all.

“Liese and I have never had eyes for anyone else in the ten years since we’ve met each other, right?”

As I told her that with a smile, Liese frowned with a deep blush whilst Art’s disgusted looking face only intensified.

『Cheating! No good! Absolutely not!』

Endow delivered his commandment in a broken string of words, for some reason.

『That’s the way, Sieg! Getting all lovey-dovey with the super cute Rize-tan is important to our strategy of fighting the witch! It’s a shame that we couldn’t get Leon-sensei to help out, but so long as Rize-tan’s heart is stable then we have nothing to fear from that witch!』

Gaining heart from Coebayashay’s words, I strode confidently towards the battlefield, hand in hand with the girl I loved.

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And finally, we reached it.

When we arrived on the scene, I heard Coebayashay mention 『It should only be about fifteen minutes away, right?』, as we saw that the General, Fabian, Miss Cecilie and the other eleven knights had already fully equipped themselves and looked ready for battle at any time.

Of course, we too prepared ourselves and got into position. Art still looked slightly frustrated, but also ready for the fight ahead.

And then...

“Oh, looks like I made it on time?”

From the darkness, a masked man emerged with those words.

『What’s happening now!?!』

Endow sounded astonished, but I didn't have a clue either. It was as if he had materialized out of the night, no one had heard or seen him approach at all.

“Knave, who are you!?”

One of the knights, a rugged man in his middle ages, said so without even trying to conceal the threat in his voice.

The masked man he yelled at must be around 175cm tall? Slender, with dark brown hair.

But, of course, it was the mask that truly caught the eye above all.

The knights couldn't help but be wary of this unfamiliar man with the strange mask that covered the upper half of his face, that looked like a pure white cat.

However, we students, as well as the younger-looking knights who must have only graduated in the past few years, were baffled by the sudden realization it seemed we simultaneously came to.

“I am... How should I put this... Hmm... Well, call me Karschen. Unfortunately, I couldn't find a rat, so a cat will have to do.”

Even though we could only see his mouth, there was something obviously familiar in that relaxed smile of his.

“No no no no! Even with that mask on, there's no way you're anyone other than Mister Le-” “Just who on earth is this man, I have no idea who he may be!?”

Just before Finne could finish her sentence, I shouted over her at the top of my lungs.

In an instant, everyone's eyes turned to me.

Don't say a word.

I looked meaningfully at the students and recent alumni who stared back at me, people who obviously knew the identity of the masked man.

It seemed like they got the message since none of them opened their mouths. Meanwhile, the older adults just seemed even more confused about what was going on.

I know. I know just as well as everyone else that this was Mister Leon.

He could have at least worn a mask that covered more of his face. And why a cat? What did he mean when he was talking about a rat? I had so many questions I wanted to ask, but I managed to swallow them down and pretended that I didn't have a clue who the man in front of us was.

Because, I remembered what Coebayashay had told me earlier. That 『Due to certain circumstances, Leon-sensei cannot let the true extent of his abilities become known』.

So, that's why he appeared the way that he did. It was obvious just by looking at him. If it became known just what Leon Schafe was capable of, things could turn very nasty for him.

So, I played the fool with every ounce of conviction I had. Since I had the highest standing of anyone here, I took the responsibility of keeping up the farce onto my own shoulders.

“What I am saying, *what I am saying is*, that I have no idea who this person is. Or, are you saying that I have become blind? If any of you wish to insult the Crown Prince of this country, you best be prepared to suffer the consequences!!”

As I looked at them all, putting very specific emphasis on my words, it seemed they all slowly came to understand what I meant... or, perhaps, didn't see any point in going against my stubbornness.

“Yes, me too, I have absolutely no idea who this man is!”

The second-highest-ranking person here, Marquis Riefenstahl, cottoned onto my words with a smile and agreed. Thank goodness.

So long as he's working with me, we can make sure that it's commonly accepted that Mister Leon was definitely nowhere near here tonight, there was only Karschen. At the very least, we can count on the knights to hold their tongues.

“Indeed, I am sure that Sir Karschen is a wandering mage with a strong taste for justice, who must have sensed the great evil of the Ancient Witch and came to lend us his age.”

As the General nodded at the farce I was construction, I breathed a small sigh of relief.

“Quite so! I have no idea who Sir Karschen is, but I am sure he is a trustworthy fellow and a reliable comrade!”

As the General and I kept up our ridiculous play, the people around us either gaped in confusion or stared at us with something resembling pity. However, there was one person who held a hand to his mask as he laughed.

“Fu... Fufu... Fuhahaha! Ah yes, Your Highness, you're definitely a good boy, aren't you?”

Unable to hold back that loud laughter of his, he said that.

『I see now. Taking advantage of his position of Crown Prince, Sieg managed to have Leon-sensei participate in the battle as an unknowing mage allied to the cause of justice, huh?』

Coebayashay sounded impressed, but I could barely listen to her words as I furiously tried to hold back the embarrassment as I listened to the self-styled Karschen laugh.

Even though I did this on the spur of the moment, I realized just what I had played along with. This really is embarrassing.

『The full reverse harem has been assembled! Now, only victory awaits!!』

As I heard Endow's excited voice, I managed to calm down a little bit. That's right, in order to win this battle to protect both the country and Liselotte, then participating in a little farce was nothing. At least, that's what I'll tell myself.

『But, I wonder just why he suddenly decided to volunteer to participate?』

I couldn't help but ponder over Coebayashay's question as well. Why would he suddenly risk his life like this?

“Fuhaha, that’s right, I am *the* Karschen! On behalf of a certain princess... or rather, comrade? Well, at any rate, as her disciple... or perhaps, her partner, I’ve come to perform a little *mischief*.”

As he said those words with another laugh, for some reason, he looked straight at Finne with a smirk.

The pretty girl who had been described by some of the older teachers at tonight’s party as the ‘second coming of the Fairy Princess’, looked at the masked man with a confused expression.

## A Maiden in Love is Invincible

『The same member composition as the reverse harem end! Each member's ability has risen! On top of that, we have the kingdom's elite knights that are led by Rizepapa! As one would expect I can only see this as a win!!..... or rather, isn't this more like bullying the weak?』

“The crime of trying to get your hands on my Liselotte is heavy. Even if it's overkill, it still won't be enough...!”

Rather, I felt enthusiastic after hearing Endow's bearish words and readied my sword. Finne, who is wearing gauntlets on her fists just for today, also nodded strongly.

“It's still not enough to kill the scoundrel who has been trying to take Onee-sama's body and making her suffer, even if it's 100 times.”

『That's the spirit, you two! There's no chance that you will lose, but don't let your guard down! Please beat her with all your might!!』

Both me and Finne nodded to Coebayashay's words, but Liese, who received the goddess's favour, shouted with an angry voice while having a red face.

“Sieg! Finne! C-Could you please refrain yourself saying something embarrassing at this point of time!? To begin with, our enemy is that Ancient Witch, so you should fight for this kingdom, not me!!”

“Of course, the kingdom is also important. However, if it were for the sake of the kingdom, the crown prince (*I*) wouldn't be at the front line. I'm currently standing here as your fiancé. A fiancé who is furious due to his beloved being harmed.”

“.....t-that! I-I understand. If Your Highness intends to do so, I will protect you as the crown prince's fiancée and a person from the Riefenstahl family.”

My words seemed to ignite something inside Liese's heart. It seemed like she renewed her decision and then shook her spear with vigor.

『Because a maiden in love is invincible, right!? Do your best Rize-tan!!』

“Now, show yourself, Ancient Witch! I will have the tables turned even without having to trouble His Highness!!”

Coebayashay's words and Liese's provocation struck the courtyard almost simultaneously.

In response to this, *white smoke* rose up in the center of the courtyard which was the spawn point of the Ancient Witch that the gods had mentioned in advance.

『.....White? Huh? Was the smoke when the witch appeared back then white too?』

『No, it was black... and it was supposed to be in an eerie and sinister motion...』

Endow and Coebayashay exchanged strange voices.

Certainly the smoke that is rising is pure white, and there are golden sparkles mixed in together, making it a rather divine atmosphere. Even though it's not as bright as during daytime, it shines mysteriously in the courtyard where the sun has set completely and there's a bonfire prepared in advance.

“Rather..... I feel like Sir Karschen's appearance a little while ago was more wicked than this...”

I inadvertently agreed with the words that Finne muttered, but immediately sensed a pressuring smile from someone as if it's wringing my neck.

No, there are still things that are mysterious as well. Even though, it's impossible for a sorcerer of justice to be more evil than an evil ancient witch.

『She has appeared...!』

Endow's voice resonated in our ears.

The smoke is starting to clear up and showing us a certain figure.

Come now...!

The smoke is scattered by the gust of night wind and the silhouette of the existence at the center becomes clear.

‘The Ancient Witch’ that emerged from there, also known as ‘The Great Disaster’ and ‘The Purest of Evil’, the evil itself that has repeatedly tried to bring this kingdom, the world, into a crisis of destruction,

is in a kneeling position.

“Is she crouching?”

“What is that pose?”

“For the time being, should we try hitting her?”

“Is she preparing to invoke a certain magic?”

“It might be a strategy to throw us off guard.”

Everyone on the spot confused on what they have seen, but still keeps the same fighting stance.

No, for some reason, only Arthur was silent and solidified with a grim expression.

『The witch's hair is white...!?』

Endow voiced his astonishment.



Certainly, according to the legend and the words from the gods, the ancient witch was totally in black, but in actuality, who appeared before us has a shining, transparent white skin and a godly platinum blonde hair.

A breathtakingly beautiful, straight platinum-colored hair spreading on the ground due to the witch's strange pose which left me with a feelings of guilt.

『I don't know why but, she looks like a 2P player of the witch. However, please don't let your guard down.』

Although I nodded to Coebayashay's voice, I was reluctant to assault someone who is prostrating and I couldn't move as I'm at a loss due to her existence that doesn't look evil at all. Almost everyone in this place would also think like so.

『Ohh, Finne makes the first move!』

『She doesn't know what is going on, but she's probably thinking on trying to hit her for the time being, I see? Ah, no, Arthur is aware of it and is trying to stop her...?』

The gods commented on the movements of the two people who seemed to be an exception.

“Wait, Finne-chan! You can't do that. This person is-” **“I-I'M TERRIBLY SORRY FOR WHAT I HAVE DONE!!”**

The witch yelled so.

The ancient witch said her apology as if to cover Arthur's words with a trembling voice but loud enough to be heard by everyone present.

The witch then raised her face and looked up to me, the representative, with her golden eyes, and opened her mouth.

“I have no willingness to resist! I will surrender to you all! That's why! Please! Please do forgive for what I have done...!”

Bam!

She struck her forehead against the ground as vigorously as what it has sounded.

“Wawawawah! P-Please raise your head!!”

Arthur rushed towards her in a panic and tried to help her. It's unusual for him to use honorifics.

“This is fine! Prostration alone is not enough! I'm the ancient witch! I did something very bad! I tried to do terrible things to Miss Liselotte over there, so as expected I'm really scared if it's 100 times, but I can't help being killed over and over that much...!”

She said so while shaking off Arthur's hand. Al looks up at me as if begging for forgiveness, but even if you're looking at me like that, I still don't know what in the world is going on.

“What is going on here?”

For the time being, I can conclude this white person is certainly the ancient witch, even though she's white. I felt uncomfortable with her existence that has the same color as the Goddess of Creation, Lilena, but I asked so without dropping my vigilance.

“...that's, umm, I connected Miss Liselotte's heart with mine. I thought it would be nice if all of my loneliness, sadness, regret, jealousy, and resentment were conveyed and synchronized.”

The witch said with a trembling voice as if she couldn't assert her own words or perhaps she's crying as I couldn't see her face.

I know about that. I heard it from the gods and Liselotte's confession.

“But turns out, ‘I'm happy! I'm overjoyed! I love His Highness Siegward! He's cool today as well! Siegllove! Lovelovelovelove!’ and such affectionate emotions was the one that came out instead-”

**“NO! STO-STOP THIS AT ONCE!!”**

Liselotte blocked the witch's words while turning crimson.

“Yes! I will stop! Forgive my rudeness!!”

The witch squeezed her forehead even further into the ground and was silent.

『Unfortunately everyone already knows that Liselotte likes Sieg, right?』

『We are the one who exposed it and she has a fairly easy-to-understand attitude as well. What's more, Rize-tan herself has sometimes confessed while being a tsungire recently.』

While I was laughing at the words that Endow and Coebayashay said, the witch looked up at me.

And then Liese looked up at me with her adorable teary eyes, so I replied her with a sweet smile.

“Madam witch, please continue.”

Liese looked shocked by my words, but the witch happily resumed her words.

“Yes! I will continue! Well, it was at the point where I was about to fall in love with His Highness Siegward as well! It's exactly what you can consider as 『A maiden in love is invincible』 ! Miss Liselotte was filled with such a happy feeling and love for His Highness, and when I touched it, my dark feelings were purified in an instant! Please look at my eyes! It's now back to the original gold, isn't it!?”

While saying so, the witch raised her face clearly and showed me her shining eyes.

“I don't know the original color of your eyes, though...”

When I was still baffled with what is going on, Arthur who is still on his knees and next to the witch let out a sigh and opened his mouth.

“There's no doubt, it's definitely her original color. This might only be my assumption but this person is perhaps the Goddess of Creation, Lilena....am I correct?”

“There's someone who knows me!! Yes! That's right! I'm Lilena! My, you really have a good eye~!”

The witch who asked Al, that is Lilena who believes in the words of two people, responded with full of joy.

“Even I’m just an unimportant priest.... That’s why, I can’t let her keep her head down with good conscience. She did say she doesn’t have any willingness to resist, right? Could you at least let her sit down instead?”

Al begged me to reply modestly to Lilena’s words.

『Let’s listen to her story for now. We now understood that the ancient witch returned back to Goddess of Creation, Lilena thanks to Rize-tan. Therefore, how about asking why did she become the ancient witch in the first place? Why did she aim for Rize-tan? And if she understands about this, could she explain how our voices can be heard by the royalty as well as Lilena herself?...』

I looked at Lilena after hearing Coebayashay’s words. That’s right, 『A maiden in love is invincible』 is the phrase that Coebayashay said and she used it earlier as well.

“I understand, Coebayashay, the goddess from a different world. However, please throw away this foolish of a deadly sinner, Lilena. Well, how about we talk from the place where we imitated the world where you live and created this world first? ”

She said so as if to tell that she knows everything about this world as well as the other world where Endow and Coebayashay live, and thus, the omnipotent goddess opened her mouth.

■■■■■

I was only one at first.

But then, I realized that one thing has power when divided in two in the middle of chaos.

I was there.

And I had an obligation to nurture this world.

Yes, I realized my existence and mission the moment I was born and the next thing I felt was, loneliness.

I understood that I'm absolute. I knew that I'm God and I fully realized that I'm living in solitude.

That's why, I divided myself into two. The pair decided to support each other and create a world together.

"This world is boring. I want someone who can talk to us."

"Do you want intelligent beings? But it's very difficult to create it, you know? It will take a lot of time. Besides, it's not always possible either."

"If that's the case, we should imitate something else. Let's make a creature similar to it."

This world was made according to these two intentions.

This world is the result of trying to create the same thing by creating the land, the sea, the sky, and human beings, using *some place elsewhere* as a model.

"Let's be the father and mother of this world."

The moment they decided to create a human, they regarded themselves as two human beings, the Goddess Lilena and the God Kuon, who looked like humans from some place.

They turned into a beautiful man and woman with platinum hair and golden eyes, like the light itself.

Then the pair made love and thus, various lives were born as their children.

Beings that can live without eating other beings, beings that can fly in the sky, beings that are powerful, beings that have claws, beings that have poison, beings that can multiply quickly...

A lot of beings were born, only those with strength survived, and eventually 'Human' was born.

"Ohh, it's very similar."

The same look as them who has a similarity as a human. Both were supposed to have the same feeling, that is affection.

However, Kuon made a mistake.

When he saw the first man and woman were in love with each other, he had hoped that he *could be loved* like this.

And he wanted to make the first human woman, EfiEve, as his own.

**(TL Note: Changing Efia to Eeve due to the context)**

“The other one is in the way, I guess.”

The god arrogantly killed the first human man, Aadam, who is her beloved.

However, the god couldn't have what was once there.

Eeve did not forget him. She grieved about her late beloved and no matter how much Kuon gave his affection, she never loved him, nor even laughed with him.

Eeve only loved her late husband and her two children for the rest of her life and died.

“I just wanted to be loved.”

Kuon mourned and grieved about her, and his other half, Lilena, came closer to him.

“I love you. I love you more than anyone.”

However, no matter how much the goddess tells she loves him, Kuon refused it.

“Lilena is me and I am Lilena. We were originally one. What's the point in saying that you love me? I wanted to be chosen. I wanted to be chosen by Eeve. I wanted to be chosen from a myriad of choices. Chosen.... and be loved.”

Was Kuon's love affection, or just attachment to the feelings of people who couldn't stay with the power of God?

Eeve's soul which the god has directed a strong feeling to, was supposed to be destined to reincarnate in this world.

Born, raised, loved, and died. But no matter how many times he tried again and again, she still didn't love the god.

They loved the humans who are their pair, but only the god that they didn't love.

Was it because the god killed her pair at the beginning? Was it because the god was arrogant? Or was it simply because of the difference in feeling between a god and human? He, who was never loved by Eeve, eventually decided.

“That's why, I'll become a human being. Becoming a human being and be loved by her next time.”

Kuon chose to cease himself as a god.

However, Lilena could not forgive it. She cannot accept to lose her sole partner who is equivalent with her.

Hence, the two argued.

The two who were originally one and had been together all this time were hostile towards each other while yelling each other's love.

“Thank you... for killing me.”

The result was probably Kuon's victory, who died while smiling.

Kuon, the god who created the world, disappeared from the history of this world, while the goddess, Lilena, lost her mind.

*No.*

**Don't hate me.**

*Like.*

***Don't look at someone else.***

*I despise that child.*

*Don't steal my ray of hope.*

**Like.**

***Even though you're mine.***

*Despise.*

*I love you.*

*That's why.*

***IWON'TFORGIVEYOUIWON'TFORGIVEYOUIWON'TFORGIVEYOUIWON'TFORGIVEYOU  
WON'TFORGIVEYOUIWON'TFORGIVEYOUIWON'TFORGIVEYOUIWON'TFORGIVEYOU  
WON'TFORGIVEYOU, ■■■■■!***

*You threw me away, ■■■■■.*

Lilena was swallowed by the pain she had endured for the emotions she had suppressed when Kuon was there.

She, who should have been like the light itself, was dyed black and hostile with the world that she created.

Like the sadness of losing Kuon, she cursed upon this world so that she can wipe out everything that are connected to Eeve who had taken Kuon's heart.

She created monsters that attack people, caused disasters, manipulated human minds, and she became known as 'The Great Disaster' and 'The Purest of Evil'.

She, who has lost her power due to the fight with her other half, could be defeated if humankind joined together.

However, she is the mother of this world.

She gained and sometimes robbed the power from the world itself, revived, and brought chaos to the world many times. Then, over the years, she eventually became known as the 'Ancient Witch'.

## **Already Familiar With**

“...Well, to put it simply, Kuon and I had a huge marital quarrel. As a result, he as a god disappeared from this world just like what he wanted, and I became the ancient witch.”

We all kept silent as we don't know what to say after hearing Lilena's story.

It was a very precious experience to hear the story of this world's origin, our roots, and such mythical world from the goddess herself.

“Attempting world destruction because of mere jealousy...”

Such a gentle whisper from Finne reverberates greatly in the midst of silence, creating an atmosphere that is hard to describe.

That's exactly it. Even though the scale was quite large, the reason was too ridiculous to digest.

“Well, that's about it. The husband cheated and ran away, so the wife turned extremely hysterical that she eventually became the ‘Ancient Witch’.”

I didn't want to accept the truth that the goddess, Lilena admitted easily.

No, it shouldn't be just me. Everyone in the courtyard is casting their eyes downward with difficult expressions.

“Well, umm, how should I say this... I'm sorry...”

Lilena who felt the complex atmosphere, prostrated again several times.

This time, Al didn't try to calm her as he's also having a complexed look while gazing at her hair whorl. I think that's fine for him to do so.

“But, you see, umm, the worthy gods who stopped me appeared. Although I and Kuon are incompetent, the world that we made isn't so bad.... right!?”

Al turned his head to the words quoted by Lilena who just took a glance at us.

“Now that you mention it, umm... Who exactly are the gods that we are worshiping in the chapel currently other than Goddess Lilena?”

I was also curious about that as well. Lilena then looked up and silently stared at us.

“Aah, uhh... where do I start... Hmm, let's see... do you know what exactly magic is?”

We all raised our heads to Lilena's question.

“‘Magic’ directly interferes with this world which also influences what the user desires. Although there are various scales on how big it is, there's no mistake that it's our, the Gods' power. In other words, the ability of this world administrator, that is Kuon and me.”

The fact that the origin of magic came from the goddess of creation herself spread the commotion even more.



Despite our turmoil, Lilena still continues indifferently.

“I fought with Kuon until he lost his power as God, and that power was scattered all over the world. And by chance, it was stranded and taken into humanity due to having a similar disposition with us. It seems that in this kingdom, those who have the knowledge gathered, named themselves as nobles, repeated the marriage within the nobles and gradually strengthened their disposition... well, I do think that their disposition is just strong by chance, even if we are their first ancestor.”

The commotion and unrest became even bigger. Every glance pierced and went straight at me who is a royalty and Al, who is a priest as if they’re judging us.

“And among them, talented and hard-working ones came out and succeeded in gathering a lot of God’s power. To the extent of being able to defeat me, or should I say, reaching the God’s territory.

Souls who have mastered magic, gained enlightenment, understood the mechanism of this world, and awakened as managers of this world’s after death. Those are the gods of the new era which are now being worshiped by you people.

...even there are... some people here... who could reach that domain as well depending on their efforts.”

Lilena sighed after having to talk up until that point.

“At first, I never have imagined that the children, who we just wanted to have a conversation with would awaken to our abilities and take responsibility for managing the world as Gods. Truly, you can’t take your eyes off your own children...”

Saying so, she put on her motherly smile.

『Then, what is this Voice of God system? How come our voice can reach your world and moreover, how are we able to give out our blessing?』

“The other world’s god, Endow, asked about the ‘Voice of God’.”

I briefly conveyed to those who couldn’t hear the voices of the gods from another world.

“Well, first of all, the Voice of God system is, umm... to put it bluntly, a cheating system. When you modeled that world and you also want to follow its civilization, it’s definitely important to give the people from this world the detailed knowledge, but it’s too troub-..., no, it’s irrit-...that’s not it! You see, umm, the exact information might not be communicated easily by me who is not an expert on that, yeeees! That! Is what I thought!”

It seems that our royal abilities were given to us because of Goddess Lilena’s laziness. Everyone’s stares which turned into a sympathetic look were really painful now. Hence, I showed my best forced smile.

“So, umm, that’s why I made sure that the voices of sages’ souls from Coebayashay and Endow’s world can reach here!

But when Mr. Siegwald's Fitzenhagen family and the other noble families were given that privilege which I wanted them to tell the others around them in the first place so that they could create splendid kingdoms, it was misunderstood as something like the 'Voice of God.'

Is there still something else?

We readied our ears to hear her next words whilst feeling weary to a certain extent.

"Somehow, no, this is just a guess as the other god was the one who did this, but, umm, my thought is that did the new god of this world take this chance to pass the prophecy(?) while thinking 『Uwaah, won't this world turn into chaos if so? I want to tell them but how should I do it? Ah! There's this Voice of God so let's use it so that they can hear those two's voices! Do your best, Fitzenhagen~!』 "

*『Correeeeeect!』*

! ?

A strangely young and cheerful voice suddenly resonated. Was it the new god?

『Wait a sec! We are not dead nor this so-called sage though!? That's completely off from what we're dealing right now!!』

In response to Coebayashay's angry voice, Lilena only returned with an "Ah".

I wanted to ask whose young voice was that, but I'll keep quiet for now.

"That's because, umm, how do I say this, it's because of my idiot husband, Kuon who is an Eevee stalker..."

Lilena changed her position and was already prostrating while saying so.

I no longer feel any sense of discomfort with her beautiful hair spreading on the ground now.

"First, Kuon is trying to reincarnate as a person, but this world has my curse sprinkled on it. Therefore, it seems he has possessed someone in that world as he can't become a human in this world."

『Not reincarnated but possessed, you said?』

『Someone-... hold on! you mean he's occupying Kuon Kirisato's body!?!』

After hearing Endow and Coebayashay's surprised voice, I took a glance at Goddess Lilena just to see that she's pressing her forehead to the ground without saying anything.

It's the same prostrate stance as when entering the chapel. The Goddess Lilena sculpture in the chapel has even felt that it would be better to recreate this stance.

## Extremely Small Fry

“Because Kuon is a foreign object in that world, reincarnation is impossible.... However, because there’s this 【Majikoi】 thing exists and this world is now connected to it through that, Kuon took on someone’s body there and I guess he’s trying to take Finne along with Eeva’s soul into that world.”

“W-W-W-W-Wait a moment! There’s too much information for me to handle!”

Finne swiftly stopped Lilena’s words, which still seem to have a lot more to explain.

Finne slowly asked the goddess, whose head is tilted and giving a dumbfounded look.

“Uhhh, first of all, I’m the first woman, Eeva’s reincarnation? Was it?”

“That’s right, that’s why I tried to possess Miss Liselotte, who was jealous of you as a rival.”

Is that the prerequisite? Finne seemed angry at the words from the goddess, but she managed to keep asking questions.

“So, what do you mean by taking me to Coebayashay’s world?”

“That’s what it is. Kuon will pull your soul out of your body, bring it to that world, toss it into a fresh corpse or a human whose soul is dead and become lovers, is what I think he will do.”

“A fresh corpse or a dead soul... that’s really disturbing, though...”

“That’s what Kuon will prepare for Finne to ‘possess’, right?”

In addition, Finne’s body will be left in this world in a state of whether she would be dead or semi-dead if her soul got pulled out.

Finne, whose plan had been arbitrarily constructed, turned pale and fell one step back.

Both Liese and Baldur caught and hugged her, and the two glared at the Goddess Lilena.

“I-I’m very sorry...!”

Lilena bowed to Liselotte.

“There’s nothing to apologize for. I knew I was targeted because of my ugly heart. But what I’m angry with is your foolish half who is trying to get the love from the innocent Finne to the point of harming someone in that world...!!”

Lilena, who is scolded by Liselotte, dug her forehead even deeper.

“Truly! Both I as well as Kuon are stupid to the core! However, Miss Liselotte doesn’t have an ugly heart! Please let me refute just this one because it was the one that connected me and the one that has saved me!!”

Lilena shouted loudly and desperately, leaving Liselotte closing her mouth as if she was overawed.

“Certainly, my Liselotte is a very nice girl that everyone loves, but what do you mean by saved.....?”

As her replacement, I stepped a step forward and asked so, the Goddess Lilena spoke while lowering her head.

“In the beginning, I thought that Miss Liselotte was the same as me. In addition, she’s strong and also physically trained, so I thought she’s a good prey and tried to take her. However, under the protection of Miss Coebayashay and Mr. Endow, loved by Mr. Siegwand, Miss Liselotte herself has a strong and noble heart, and her brilliant and shining love is also beautiful..., it was, completely different from me.”

Liselotte turned red and looked down while listening to the goddess who slowly put her words. Though, everyone on the spot is looking at her with gentle eyes.

“While interacting with Miss Liselotte, I also remembered my love for Kuon and the love for this world that I had created. Hence, I was able to return to the white me.

When I was the ancient witch, I was black and only consumed dark things, such as “Thanksgiving, but there’s no last dance partner”, “Riajuu go explode”, or “Don’t you dare be festive, society”. That’s why I couldn’t gather any power as I couldn’t do it at all.

But the white me has the warm power from everyone who worshiped Lilena even when I was the ancient witch, the prayers that everyone dedicated for their gratitude, the hope that was conveyed, love, wish, happiness, those lots of white things told me a lot...

Not only just my power which is certain to recover, my body got recovered as well, please look at this body! There’s even legs!

The Goddess of Creation, Lilena, is completely resurrected here!”

Saying so, she stood up bright and beautiful to the point of being divine.

The platinum hair which extend to the lower part of the waist, slender limbs, and even the dust that had adhered due to her prostrating, seemed to emit light.

“Resurrection of the Goddess Lilena...”

Al who is a priest, muttered so deeply that his eyes were moistened, but for the goddess, her forehead, her palms and knees, as well as her hair were covered with soil.

It’s wonderful to say that the goddess, Lilena has regained her power so that she can see through everything in here and that world, though.

“Everything is thanks to Miss Liselotte! Thank you!! So, uhh, umm... Could the temple please give some kind of medal of honour to Miss Liselotte in exchange for me?”

However, seeing Lilena’s expression when asking Al while rubbing her hands along with her speech and conduct from before, makes her look exactly like a small fry.

.....is she the real one?

“Of course! She naturally has the qualification of a saint... and, there might be some interruption from another kingdom, so get married as soon as possible, will you?

Let’s see, at the time of the ceremony, Goddess Lilena will appear with a bang, bless your marriage and announced that she’s a saint. It will be some kind of proclamation so that plan could work.”

Al, however, told Lilena pliantly with a carefree attitude in front of us.

“M-Married!? What are you talking about suddenly!?”

Liese shouted at Al with a red face.

“No, I’m serious. I mean, Liselotte-chan is the Marquis’ daughter, right? You’re your papa’s general too, right? You got the training to become a queen since childhood and moreover, you’re also beautiful, right? And not just that, you’re acknowledged to be a saint as you have resurrected Goddess Lilena as well, so other kingdoms will obviously want to have you, you know?

It might even occur a war between kingdoms just for taking you.

That’s why, quickly get married to Sieg. If we had a marriage blessed by the Goddess, as one would expect, there can be no one who would want to interrupt with it.”

“Me too! I and Endo will bless their marriage!!”

As Liese’s marriage partner, I’m bewildered with what Al had nonchalantly said and the cheerful words from Coebayashay as well. Please hold on a moment.

“Then, I don’t need to be a saint!! I don’t look like a saint to begin with... if it’s from the temple or the likes, then won’t it just be fine to honor Arthur Richter who’s a priest in my replacement?”

“Nononono, that’s impossible, a priest can’t lieee. I can’t even do nothing when Goddess Lilena is already resurrected like this. There are temples outside our kingdom as well, and I don’t think I can hide it for so looong.

I mean, look, if you become a saint and have the Goddess bless your marriage at the same time, won’t your status as a queen be even more solid? You will almost have zero worry about being cheated, you know? Moreover, in diplomatic terms, it will be very useful for a queen to be recognized as a saint and good for the kingdom, right? That’s why, just be obedient and accept it, or rather, if you don’t accept it, I might be beaten up in the temple...”

“Even if you say something like that, the time for His Highness’s marriage depends on the circumstances of the kingdom and, above all, his own will....!”

Liese and Al were in a discussion, and I have no idea when to insert my opinion here. Please, hold on for a moment, I also have something called a plan...

“Eeh? Those kind of things depends on you, though? or rather, do you not want to marry Sieg, Liselotte-chan?”

“That’s..., umm... I want... but...”

I’m glad. I purposely made a quick footstep after Liselotte looked down with a bright red face.

“Liese.”

When I called her name, Liselotte turned to me with a surprised look.

I kneeled in front of her and gently took her left hand.

“Looking like this and propose is somewhat sloven, but...”

Saying so, I smiled and Liese trembled while having wet eyes.

“I will graduate from this school but you will still have two more years being here and it can’t be helped that we will have an increased amount of time away from each other. So I’m honestly uneasy. I know that you’re not a person that could cheat, but I can’t stop the others from thinking about you. I want to show the public that you are officially mine. I want to live in the same house as you and spend some time together.

Therefore, will you marry me as soon as I graduate?”

Saying so, I put out a ring from my pocket. The moment I tried to put it on her left ring finger, I realized that my hand was shaking unavoidably and I couldn’t do it. This is really uncool.

“...that’s what I wanted to tell you. My father, my mother, the Riefenstahl couple, and even my father’s aide had talked about this since a while back.

Though, I... wasn’t going to say it here and in such a way, you see...”

I have said everything that I wanted to say while being most likely uncool, and Liselotte nimbly turned to her father, the Marquis.

“Yeah. I had heard that His Highness wants to propose before he graduated and arrange the ceremony

next fall, but... somehow, could you, make it until spring instead...?”

Saying so, her father gave a weak smile while his face was looking seemingly lonely and could cry at any moment.

The Riefenstahl father and daughter stared at each other with complex expressions. There’s probably lots of emotions filled inside their purple crystal eyes, both of which are moistened with tears.

Soon enough, the father slowly nodded once in silence.

“.....”

Liselotte turned her eyes away from her father to avoid crying and slowly and straightly faced me.

“.....Is it, okay?”

I finally put the ring on her fingertip with my hand that has stopped quivering.

“.....I’m... happy.”

Saying so, Liese then put her right hand on my hand to support me, and I put the ring on her.

\*PIKA!!\*

At that moment, the Goddess, Lilena glowed.

“I-I’m sorry, I’m, umm..., because I had received my power from Miss Liselotte, I have to link with her by all means, or rather, thank you for another good quality power, or rather, it’s the Goddess nature to glow when she had been given power, or rather, umm..., I-I didn’t plan to get in the way...”

The goddess then slowly kneeled and returned to her prostrate (default) position.

“...Read the mood.”

The moment the goddess of the other world (Coebayashay) reprimanded her with a very low angry voice, this world goddess (Lilena) slammed her forehead onto the ground.

## Chapter 42 – Wow, amazing (Part 1)

“...Even now, there are a lot of things I have to ask of Lady Lilena.

Liese, shall we start from scratch later?”

After I broke my silence by saying that, Liselotte nodded, although still looking a bit sulky.

In the first place, I had a feeling that we should try to not get things mixed up with the Goddess Lilena’s story. We should get to the end of it right away.

“So, 【Majikoi】 ? What exactly is that?

Using that, Kuon and others tried to harm Finne... and why did Mr. Endow and Miss Coebayashay help us?”

I may have spoken out of turn, but still Lady Lilena knelt down as she answered my depressing-sounding question.

“Kuon made a game called 【Majikoi】 .

Through 【Majikoi】 , lots of people from over there would come to know of the existence of this world, and above all, about Finne. They would learn of their existence, keep it in their minds, and think about it...

Because of that, the connection between that world and ours has become quite stronger. And a path has opened up for Finne as well.”

Someone walks among the snow. Then someone else walks along their footprints. Then it gradually becomes a path... Would it be something like that?

As the footprints -the thoughts- of many people accumulate, so the story of Fiona would become known, and so Kuon would propagate it to that world.

That’s what I got from the Goddess Lilena’s explanation.

“That path would appear in front of Kuon, who through various connections would shadow insistently over Finne, and through it, the accumulated thoughts of the players of that world would give him strength.”

『…The God Route, huh?』

Miss Coebayashay muttered in a low voice in response to the seemingly unconcerned Goddess Lilena’s words.

Lady Lilena raised her face enough to catch a glimpse of her, and then nodded.

“That’s right.

However, since there was a much stronger connection... Or rather, a much more similar relation than the one between Kuon and Finne, it didn’t quite go as planned.

In other words... Umm... Should I really say this?”



## Chapter 42 – Wow, amazing (Part 2)

After saying that, Lady Lilena tilted her head to the side in doubt.

Her eyes met mine as I was too tilting my head to the same side, and I just nodded.

“In short, there were similarly passionate, one-sided feelings of love here and there, and since those feelings of love from such pure young men had resonated, Kuon wondered if Mr. Endo and Miss Kobayashi had dampened down his carefully prepared position of “God’s Voice”.

One-sided love.

Whether it was Mr. Endow’s or Miss Coebayashay’s, disclosing that info willy-nilly may not be the best thing to do.

Liselotte, who was standing right next to me, was looking at the goddess with eyes that looked like sharp knives.

“But there’s another possibility! One of us here may have a very similar personality to either one of those two! Like twin souls or something like that! They would have a high affinity after receiving the power of the player’s thoughts! Or maybe Mr. Endo and Miss Kobayashi’s feelings for this world are particularly strong!”

『That useless goddess can’t keep her mouth shut, huh?』

Mr. Endow’s voice echoed, half a sigh and half a grunt of anger, directed straight at the Goddess Lilena for her nervous excuse.

“Uhh... I... I’m sorry.

Umm, anyway, those two were able to become gods by taking away the position that Kuon had carefully prepared, and because of that I could regain a lot of my former power, bringing me close to omnipotence once again. So I’m sure that if we can hear their voices, then we can definitely bring back Kuon’s soul, possessed by Kuon Kirisato...”

As she said that, the Goddess Lilena straightened her back.

“So please, Mr. Endo. Miss Kobayashi. Please, let me offer you my love.”

At the precise moment the Goddess Lilena finished saying that, a golden light emerged from her and shot itself into the sky.

『…Huh?』

『Waahh!?!』

That light so rose high and far above that it must have pierced through the heavens, and perhaps reached the gods of another world.

## Chapter 42 – Wow, amazing (Part 3)

“With this, you two are my kin now. The next time you face Kuon, I’ll pull his soul out of his body through you. By doing that, we should be able to help that poor Kuon Kirisato.

And in order to not cause any further problems to Finne or anyone else, I’ll make sure to seal off Kuon’s soul in this world.

With that, the **【Game】** that Kuon had started should come to its end.

It may be an inconvenience to the both of you until the very end, but could I ask you to please go see Kuon...?”.

The goddess Lilena pleaded as, once again, her forehead touched the ground.

『Alright. Or perhaps I should say, I’ve accepted your request. After all, I feel sorry for that poor Kuon Kirisato, with his body being possessed and all.』

And so Miss Coebayashay made a contract with the light.

『I have no objections either.

But I do have a question about this favor of yours... What did we do in the end? Have we made Kuon gather those maiden’s powers? And some of these powers were transferred over to both Liselotte and Baldur?』

The goddess Lilena once again raised her head and proudly puffed her chest at Mr. Endow’s words.

“That’s precisely what happened.

Since there is no magic in your world, there is really no easy way to explain this, but let’s just say that both of you are really lucky!”

She said that triumphantly, posing with her hands placed on her hips so as to exert her own greatness. Al quickly began to applaud her so as to praise her, but no one joined him.

Her forehead had become dirty due to her bringing it to the ground so much, which probably was hurting her dignity.

『Luck, huh... How lucky are we talking about?』

Miss Coebayashay asked with a calm voice.

“Well, not enough to actually win the grand prize in the lottery, but probably enough to win the special prize!

You’re a student as well... Right, Ms. Kobayashi? To put it in a way that is more related to your everyday life... It would be as if from now on, you were able to solve everything related to your exams, your studies, and your fields of expertise!”

『What about easily getting passing grades without even studying?』

Mr. Endow’s voice had a hint of disappointment as he asked that.

“I think that scenario goes a little beyond luck.

We’re talking about the level of luck that would make others say “Oh, how lucky!” when completing such tasks.

But we’re talking about your entire life from now on, see? You’re going to be a bit luckier for all eternity! Isn’t that great? Am I not great?”

『Wow, amazing.』

Miss Coebayashay said that with a plain and monotone voice, completely devoid of emotion.

## **Waaah, Amaaaazing**

“...There are still lots of things that I would like to ask Lilena-sama. Liese, will you let me redo the proposal later?”

Liselotte sulked but still nodded to what I had proclaimed to break the silence.

I have a feeling that the Goddess, Lilena's story cannot be encapsulated that easily. Let's get to the bottom of it right this instant.

“So, what exactly is this “Majikoi”? Why does this so-called Kuon try to harm Miss Finne using it? And how did it end up making Endow and Coebayashay help us?”

Despite me asking in a distasteful and impolite tone, Lilena replied while keeping her prostrating posture.

“Kuon made a game called “Majikoi”. Then, through “Majikoi”, he's trying to let a lot of people know about this world, especially, about Miss Finne....

By doing so, the connection between the two worlds will become stronger. Thus, creating a path for him to Miss Finne...”

So it's like someone walked in the snow. Soon after, another one walked along his trails and this process goes on and on until it gradually becomes a path, huh....?

Kuon spread the story about this world where Finne lives and accumulated the trails (thoughts) of many people that had piled up.

My awareness was bolstered thanks to what I could gather from hearing Goddess Lilena's explanation.

“Kuon, who had a lot of ties with her, will then gather power from the thoughts of every maiden (player) over there to make said path which yearns for Miss Finne to appear in front of him, or so it was supposed to go in his scenario.”

“...God route, huh?”

Coebayashay murmured in response to Goddess Lilena's simple words.

Glancing up to the sky, Lilena nodded.

“Yes. However, in reality, there were similar yet stronger ties than that of Kuon and Miss Finne..., so it didn't go as he had planned. In other words..., umm... is it really okay to say this?”

Lilena tried to say something but stopped and bowed her head.

For the time being, I nodded and bowed my head after she glanced at me.

“In short, there was a similar passionate unrequited love between here and at that side. That love between the pure young people, Mr. Endo and Ms. Kobayashi resonated which led them getting the Voice of God position instead of Kuon who had carefully prepared himself for it, or so I think...”

Unrequited, Love.

Whether it's Endow's or Coebayashay's, it might not be a good thing to expose.

Liselotte who's standing right beside me glared at the Goddess with nothing but pure hatred.

“No! There's also another possibility! One of you could have a very similar personality to the two of them! Or there could be a soul so similar they might as well be twins! Or you might have a high affinity with the power obtained from maidens' thoughts! Or, or, Ms. Kobayashi and Mr. Endo's feelings for this world were extremely strong and such!”

“Clumsy Goddess, you’re getting off-track again.”

Endow threw a sighed, clear and angry voice towards Goddess Lilena who was making her excuses in a panic.

“Uh..ah... I-I’m sorry. Well, anyway, the two of you become gods because Kuon’s position was taken over. Because of that, I was able to somewhat regain my former power and get closer to omnipotence again. That’s why, if both of you can give your voices here, then surely you should be able to bring back Kuon’s soul that is possessing Kuon Kirisato.”

Saying so, Goddess Lilena suddenly stretches her spine.

“So Ms. Kobayashi and Mr. Endo, please let me give my love to you both.”

Right after Goddess Lilena said so, a golden light rose from her towards the sky.

“...Eh?”

“Uwaah!?”

The light that rose higher and higher, straight to the heavens, has surely reached the gods of another world.

“With this, both of you are now my relatives. The next time you face Kuon, I will pull his soul through you, and the victim, Kuon Kirisato will be saved. Then, I will seal his soul in this world, so he won’t bother Miss Finne or anyone else. It will be the end of this “game” that Kuon started. I’m very sorry to trouble both of you until the end, but could you pay a visit to Kuon if you can?”

Goddess Lilena pleads while smoothly bringing her forehead to the ground.

“Ok~ or rather, you’ve sent your affection to us already and it’s pitiful for Kuon Kirisato to be possessed like that.”

Coebayashay took over the intense light.

“I don’t have any objection too~

Still, in the end, I haven’t understood what’s this “affection” is? Did we transfer a part of “Kuon’s collected maiden power” to Liselotte and Baldur back then?”

Goddess Lilena quickly raised her head to Endow’s words and lifted her chest with a proud face.

“That’s exactly what it is. There’s no magic in that world, so there is no immediate effect, but oh my! Both of you now have an incredible amount of luck!”

She said so with her hands on her hips and annoyingly proud look. Al applauded to praise her without a moment of delay, but no one followed.

It looks like her forehead and hair that are still covered with soil, is damaging her dignity even further...

“Luck..., specifically speaking, what kind of feeling is that?”

Coebayashay asked with a calm voice.

“It will still be impossible to win a lot of money in a lottery, but if it’s a raffle, you can easily get the special prize! Both of you are also students, right? To put it more simply, in the future, the two of you will be faced with exams... with that, the amount of questions that both of you have studied well or it’s around your area of expertise will mostly appear!”

“It’s not to the point of it being easy even if we don’t study?”

Endow asked with a blatant disappointment that the effect is unexpectedly small.

“That will be beyond the range of it being a good luck anymore, right? Rather than that, it’s a level of luck that can be consider as “Oh, lucky!”. But that will be your whole life from now on, you know? You’re infinitely lucky! Isn’t it great? Aren’t I amazing?”

“Waaah, amaaaazing.”

Coebayashay muttered with a plain voice without any emotion.

**“So It’s Like This, Huh?”**

“...it’s nice that from here on we’re lucky, but still...”

I muttered so while turning off the game console and Kobayashi-san, who sat beside me, slowly nodded.

“It was unexpectedly small and the effect of her affection was also questionable. Lilena, the ancient witch and god of creation.”

Right... it feels like her titles are just an exaggeration.

The moment Kobayashi-san nodded at my words with a straight face, I unconsciously let out a sigh. Today is Saturday. We gathered at Kobayashi’s house early in the morning with lots of energy and accepted the challenge. Everything was unexpected, including the development of what had happened and what would happen from there on out.

After all, that was supposed to be a direct confrontation with the last boss.

I was still afraid of what would happen if someone died even though we had prepared a fighting power like never before, to the point of Leon-sensei joining in as well. Hence, I prayed for everyone’s safety. Kobayashi-san probably had been doing it as well.

But, as it turns out, the last boss is that clumsy goddess who’s madly in love with Liselotte just like us, a person who made us let out a sigh.

I honestly thought that she’s certainly amazing as she somehow knows all the circumstances by using her Goddess power, including my unrequited feelings which I had to stop her abruptly, wait no, that made me downhearted though...

“Now that you mention it, wasn’t Leon-sensei too pitiful?”

After spilling my sudden thought, Kobayashi-san, who was buried in the sofa while staring blankly, got up and nodded.

“He went to the trouble of disguising himself and came all the way from the shadow...”

“Seriously, that clumsy goddess..., prostrating is not enough for that...”

Siiiigh, our long sighs overlapped with each other.

“Well, in any case, we need to go meet Kuon Kirisato and get the evil god, Kuon’s soul out of him.”

Kobayashi-san declared so and made a small guts pose to keep her in spirit.

“Evil god, huh... well, can’t deny that. The problem is how to get there... as expected, the university? But what happens after we meet him and pull out the soul? Won’t it be bad if people see us?”

“If possible, it’s better for you two to stay in a hidden area. It might take a while for Kuon Kirisato’s soul to return to his body, so he might be fainted for a while.”

Both of us froze having to suddenly heard Goddess Lilena’s voice, who was on the TV up until a while ago.

However, the TV and the game console in front of us had been turned off. Rather, was it from outside the room? No, I don’t know where it’s coming from.

“Well, the two of you are now lucky **all. Because. of. Me.!** So you’ll probably be able to find the perfect time where Kuon is likely to appear just by wandering around!”



The Goddess, Lilena continued so with a proud voice as if she's showing her smug look with just her voice.

I see, so this is what she means by her love...

It's a bit disappointing to call her a small being and clumsy while her partner is called an evil god.

Though, I'm not willing to correct it at all.

"Ueeeh, I'm being possessed by Goddess Lilena... No waaay..."

Kobayashi-san murmured with a complete sour look.

"Let's catch Kuon quickly. With this, you will stop peeking at our lives, right?"

When I replied so, the goddess let out her voice in a panic.

"Wawawah! T-there's no problem! I gave my love to both of you, so I can only see the situation where both Kobayashi-sama and Endou-sama are together! I can't interfere with individual privacy! Also, like what Endou-sama had said, if I finished sealing Kuon's soul here, I swear that I will stop disturbing both of you from there on! A goddess will not lie!"

Well, I guess that's fine? Though, this is quite awkward...

Being peeped and interfered as one pleases...

Finne and Sieg really endured this well. Was it because they believe in god? Though, the goddess herself doesn't feel like a goddess at all.

"Ah..."

I heard the goddess muttered as if she noticed something.

I frowned and Kobayashi-san tilted her head waiting for her continuation.

"U-umm, a goddess won't lie but, she can still make some mistakes..."

She let out a 'hehehe' laugh with a cheery voice as if she's rubbing her hands to curry favor with us which made my face became even grimmer.

"That's right. you accidentally made a mistake and tried to destroy the world that you called your own child, right?"

Gan!

A bumping sound was heard somewhere after I gave out my sarcasm. Perhaps Lilena's forehead has sunk into the ground once again.

"Forgive me! Umm, that, I'm sorry! Just for once! I was just wondering if I can interfere at that side after Kuon's soul is sealed just for once!"

The goddess mumbled so.

"What do you mean by for once?"

Kobayashi-san asked while pouting.

"That, umm...the 'Game', I would like to at least let both of you see the weddings of Liselotte and her friends after Kuon is sealed or something like that..."

Lilena said so while gradually lowering her voice.

Kobayashi-san and I quickly matched our eyes and nodded at the same time.

“I definitely want to see it! Let us see it! I also want to, uhh.. give my blessing? to them as well!”

“Rather, it’s to the point that it should have been us who ask for it. We beg of you, goddess.”

When Kobayashi and I said that with vigor, the goddess let out a happy voice.

“If that’s the case! I will temporarily call your souls into this world with my power!”

The goddess voiced out her excitement along with a snort as if she’s feeling enthusiastic.

“Fufufu, yeah, by all means~”

Kobayashi-san is truly enjoying this.

“Take us there and put us back safely, okay?”

I was a little worried about entrusting our soul to the clumsy goddess, so I gave her a warning.

“Of course! I will carefully pull out and put back the soul of the two of you who are my, Liselotte-sama, and this world’s benefactor! If possible, I will practice transporting soul across the two worlds using Kuon’s soul several times!”

Is that even humane?

Though, he’s the source of all evils and an adulterer bastard, so I guess she’s fine with it...?

“Then, to join Rize-tan’s wedding ceremony! I’m ready to catch Kuon’s soul anytime!”

Kobayashi-san stood up and declared so happily.

“Ooh!”

I yelled and thrust my fist up while sitting on the sofa.

While also thinking that this has become no more than insect collecting even though it was supposed to be a serious development to capture the soul of an evil god.

## **“Sunday is Sunday”**

“Sunday is an off day as expected, huh...”

“I just checked with my sister and it seems that there are a few university students who attend classes on Saturday, but it’s mostly empty on Sunday unless there are certain classes or events...”

We immediately went to Kuon Kirisato’s university where Kobayashi-san’s older sister also attends to. Although the gate wasn’t closed, the atmosphere is just too quiet and mostly empty with people as if wanting to say that we can’t enter this place at all. Thus, we sneaked in while exchanging words with a low voice.

“As expected, this is not something that can be managed by being lucky or something like that.”

“Right.... Ah, I guess it just arrived! My sister said that she has a friend who is a stalker-level fan of Kuon Kirisato and has his lesson schedules! Look!”

It seems that the light \*piron\* tone that came with the message from Kobayashi’s sister, was because of us being lucky.

I peered into Kobayashi-san’s smartphone screen from her back.

It turns out that today is hopeless after looking at the received schedule and places which Kuon Kirisato will likely appear one by one. Looks like Kuon Kirisato isn’t here on Sunday as he works on days when he doesn’t have class.

“...Should we call it a day for now?”

“...You’re right. Let’s come again next time.”

We exchanged such words while looking at the continuous received text messages.

“Uhh, sorry. I should have asked my sister in advance...”

Perhaps because she was talking while exchanging messages with his sister, Kobayashi-san gave out a slightly spoiled voice, just like a ‘little sister’ would do, which made me not really care about Kuon Kirisato anymore.

“No, I’m also at fault for not questioning our chosen time, sorry. As we’re just having a look for today, how about we have some lunch nearby?”

Kobayashi-san then raised her face with joy and nodded after I suggested so.

“You should have asked me if you want to meet Kuon Kirisato.. I can be your guide if you come on weekdays!”

It seems that all the information about Kuon Kirisato has been sent completely, thus such message popped up when we were looking.

“No way.”

Kobayashi-san, whose mind seems to have already focused on lunch, quickly replied with two words. Rather, Kobayashi-san is usually an angel, but I feel that she’s in a bit of a rebellious period only for her sister.

“What’s with that reply!? Shiipomu is being cold to me recently!”

A crying penguin stamp was sent almost at the same time with the message. I couldn’t suppress my laugh when I saw such a thing and Kobayashi-san glared at me as a response.

“Sorry. Puh, kuhkuh, Shiipomu, is that what you are called?”

When I asked with a laugh about the strangely adorable nickname, Kobayashi Shihono-san scowled at her smartphone which is displaying her sister’s chat with tremendous embarrassment.

“Uh. That’s my nickname when I was little... It might because of a habit but I just wish that she would stop... Ah geez! This is why an older sister is...!”

That said, she shoved her smartphone into her bag. Seems like it’s decided that she won’t respond to her chat.

“She’s your older sister, so how about telling our situation and ask for her cooperation?”

I felt sorry for her sister and casually suggested such proposal.

“.....sorry....no can do.”

Kobayashi-san uttered her refusal in a tiny voice and tears in her eyes.

“Eh!? Ah! Sorry! I went too far and involved myself into someone’s business!!”

Without knowing what to do with her in a depressed state, I reflected on myself and bowed down.

“It’s fine... I’m not on bad terms with my sister. She’s beautiful, smart, and I’m proud to have her as my sister... I even borrowed her clothes for today as well. But.....sorry, I just don’t want her to know about Rize-tan and the others, or rather I want to solve this with Endou-kun alone...”

She talked bit by bit with a dejected voice.

I could only desperately nodded while searching for words to cheer her up.

I can’t say that I didn’t really think about it that much, but, should I say it...? but...uhh..what to do..?

“Excuse me, Kobayashi-sama! Endou-sama! Umm, I was wondering if I have to stay quiet before, but, umm.., could you head a little to the north? Umm, Kuon? is it? There is a similar aura like him just about 500 meters northwest from here!!”

I sighed after hearing Lilena’s sudden voice.

Kobayashi-san also wiped her overflowing tears with her hands and lifted up her face.

“...Shall we go?”

I managed to nod to the awkward words that she made.

“...Sorry, let’s go.”

Joining the same club, attending the same class, playing Gods together since before the summer vacation.

I’m ashamed of myself thinking that our distance was getting closer and talked about her relationship and family that easily.

We kept silent and head to the direction indicated by the goddess with a difficult atmosphere.

That is, to the back of a large library that is much more quiet on an empty campus.

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We spotted a man in a calm atmosphere who is wearing big black-rimmed glasses and dressed loosely. There was also a small white cat at his feet who’s eating food in a small plate which the man probably brought with him.

“Hey, as expected, she’s really attached to me so can I bring this one back home?”

The man said such words while keeping his eyes on the white cat. I instinctively looked at Kobayashi-san after trying to talk to him.

“They said white is not good, you see. Pink is good? Like I can find that kind of cat. I mean, her paws are pink, and her stomach is a little pink too, that’s okay, right...?”  
I took a step forward while racking my brain at the words that he just said as if he was talking to someone.

“You’re really annoying. What... huh?”

The man lifted up his face while vomiting such nasty words.

A sloppy look, unkempt hair, and a house wear that makes him look like a neet.

This man doesn’t look like a celebrity at all. However, when I stared at him up-close, he looks very well-organized, including his glasses, which would likely be judged ugly for others to wear except him, that is, Kuon Kirisato.

**“Truly an Angel”**



“Eh? Who? ...huh? Wife? You can smell your wife scent? You mean the ‘woman’ you talked about before? ...that’s not it? Hah? What do you mean? .....Hey, don’t you go silent, Kuon.”

The man with the face of Kuon Kirisato tilted his head with a perplexed look.

“Kuon’s presence is weakening, umm..., it seems that the one who is controlling the body right now is Kuon Kirisato-san himself. While Kuon is..., uwah! He’s hiding in a rather deep place...”

Kobayashi-san and I guessed the general situation and both made eye contact with each other for a while after hearing Lilena’s words.

It appears that Kuon Kirisato wasn’t completely possessed as he is currently moving his own body. Moreover, the evil god, Kuon got scared of us who have Lilena’s blessing and ran away. What in the world are we suppose to do now...?

“Kuon is now hiding and confining himself deep inside Kirisato-san’s heart. I didn’t expect that Kuon and Kirisato-san are this closely attached... Could Kobayashi-sama and Endou-sama try making Kuon angry or upset? Otherwise, I won’t be able to get him off of Kirisato-san as he’s clinging really hard to his heart...”

We let out a deep sigh from Lilena’s unreasonable demand.

I’m not sure how to offend the evil god, Kuon, but first, we need to explain the situation to the good-looking Kirisato.

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“Hmm, I see... Sure, take him away.”

After listening to all the circumstances that we knew, Kirisato-san sat down on the ground and gave his honest reply while patting the white cat on his lap.

“Honestly, Kuon is annoying for me too. Even though I’m originally an introvert, he started using my body and becoming an actor on his own which made me shock to see that the money he earned was only for developing otome games. He also gave my body back once a week and occasionally made me go crazy. He even against taking this cat that I just found and bring her back home...

I’ve been wanting to get rid of him and get my body back. Kuon, your wife came to pick you up, just be obedient and go. Oi, Kuon. Kuuuooooon?”

Kirisato-san sighed and complained while calling out the evil god who’s currently residing in his heart.

“Kuon, your scheme has failed. The voice of god position that you were aiming for was taken by me and Kobayashi-san, and everyone in that side is happy now without anyone dying.”

“Rize-tan and Baaru are also alive, and Lilena has returned back to being a goddess. To top it all off, Finne-chan is in love with Baaru! There is no room for you anymore!”

Whether those were complaints or provocations that we just threw at him, there was still no reaction from him.

“Rather, you said you have a girlfriend but she didn’t even recognize you, let alone acknowledge you. Ain’t that just you being a stalker?”

However, at the next moment Kirisato-san murmured so, his head shook for a moment, and his expression **changed**.

“Humans, every one of them, why aren’t they respecting God (me)...”

He stood up while giving out a resentment.

The white cat that Kirisato-san likes rolled down from his lap with a short shriek, landed on the ground, and ran away as if she was scared.

“If a god is clumsy, then he will be called clumsy. If he is merciful and benevolent like Kobayashi-sama and Endou-sama, even a high school student can be praised as a god. An existence that misused his position and power will be overthrown someday. Even if it is the god who created the world itself.”

Lilena said so slowly as if she’s preaching herself as well.

The man in front of me glared at the sky.

“I didn’t expect you saying such a remarkable thing. What on earth happened to that world while I was away...”

Kobayashi-san replied with a leeway expression to the words that the evil god threw out eerily.

“Liselotte, who you thought as only a villainess, was actually very cute. That’s why we became gods instead of you, Lilena regained her sanity, the prince even became madly in love with Rize-tan, and everyone is happy. The absolute best happy ending is already confirmed, with Rize-tan, Baaru, as well as the ancient witch not dead.

With that said, the god who interferes with people’s love affairs should be sealed away by his own wife!”

Kobayashi-san said so proudly, pointing her index finger at Kuon and putting her other hand on her waist.

“That’s rich coming from you whose heart is awfully black and distorted, isn’t it?”

Kuon shined his eyes in golden color and fixed his gaze at Kobayashi-san.

Although he’s a young man with a pale skin, Kuon Kirisato’s eyes are still brown.

While I was still confused from the incomprehensible words that he just said as well as the color change of his eyes, Kuon took a step forward towards Kobayashi-san while repeating his words.

“The same color of jealousy as I am. You, do you really want a happy ending? Aren’t you jealous?”

“Still a god, even when corrupted, huh...? Yeah, I’m jealous. But that’s why I admire Rize-tan from the bottom of my heart. I’m really glad because I know how wonderful and hard the happy endings for everyone on that side is.”

Kobayashi-san calmly replied without being upset to Kuon’s poisonous words.

“You know it too, right? The scenario for ‘Majikoi’. Liselotte in Siegward Route. Her end.”

Kuon tilted his head suspiciously from her words that were slowly said.

“Rize-tan went crazy with jealousy. She was taken over by the ancient witch and rampaged, killing Baaru. Even so, in the end, she regained her sanity. She wished for the happiness of her beloved Sieg, apologized to Baaru for killing him, and killed herself along with the ancient witch using her own hands.

Kuon, the ancient witch,...even me. Me, my, mine, all of us only cares about their own feelings! But that’s wrong! That’s where we are wrong! It’s obvious that you can’t like such self-centered and pushy existences! Even Endou-kun, obviously, would love someone who is like my sister instead of me!”

Me? What? No, wait, what?

I hurriedly chased after Kobayashi-san’s back who was walking step by step towards Kuon while screaming louder and louder.



“However, even I still don’t have the urge to kill. Hindering him.....well yeah, a bit, but I want to give up like Rize-tan did and pray for Endou-kun’s happiness instead...!”

“Wait, wait, wait! Wait! Please wait a moment!”

I shouted while hugging her from behind.

“Eh,...ah.”

Kobayashi-san, who had turned bright red likely due to her anger, instantly went pale and stopped moving.

“There seems to be some misunderstandings, but first things first, the person who I like is Shihono-san, okay?”

“.....eh?”

It seems that my unrequited love, which was so obvious that I didn’t understand why it was misunderstood as me falling in love with her sister, wasn’t really conveyed to the actual person herself. Thus, Kobayashi-san shook her head as if to play dumb.

“I... Shihono Kobayashi-san, I like you. I’ve always loved you since I decided to join the broadcasting club.”

I said my heartfelt words. I wonder if Sieg was feeling like this too at the time of that proposal.

“You’re...lying...”

Still, she seemed to not believe me and was stunned for some reason.

“No, it’s true, my unrequited love is known to all the broadcasting club members. In the first place, I’m involving myself in this is because I like Kobayashi-san! Rather, why do you think I like your sister?” When I desperately said that, Kobayashi-san shook my arm seemingly angry and shouted at me with tears.

“Because Endou-kun confessed to my sister at the school festival! Saying that she was an angel and deeply in love with her!”

She heard us as expected. Still, did she only hear that part?

“That’s because your sister was asking me if I’m interested in Shihono-san. So, the things that I said about being an angel and deeply in love, everything... is all about you.”

I managed to put it into words while putting up with the embarrassment. My face, ears, and neck are turning hot.

“Umm, by the way, the way you talk before..., means that Shihono-san also likes me..., right? Then, that... should we go out?”

“Yes! I also like Endou-kun! But, I’m sorry, it was a love at first sound for me!”

Kobayashi-san accepted my suggestion with excitement.

“Love, at first sound.....?”

I couldn’t understand what Kobayashi-san was sorry for as well as her words that were unfamiliar to me. She then nodded and opened her mouth when I tilted my head.

“Yup. It was around the time when we enrolled last April. I was curious whether I have a classmate with a good voice, and by the time I saw you, I just thought that I liked how you looked as well.....”

“Didn’t I have a buzz cut back then?”

I slightly joked around the part where she said that she liked my appearance, but she confessed easily.

“Yes, you have a well-shaped head.”

“Ah, thank you?”

Having to be honestly praised, I replied so in confusion. Should I go back to the buzz cut?

“After that, when I saw you doing your best in the baseball club, I fell in love with how a hard worker you were... well, umm, in short, I totally had an ulterior motive when I dragged you to the broadcasting club, so I’m troubled if you see me as an angel...uhh...forgive me..., but are you, okay with, me?”

“Rather than answering that... that’s so cute, what’s up with that? I will cherish it for the rest of my life.”

I unconsciously hugged her.

The blushing and fidgety Kobayashi-san is truly an angel.

## **“Neither Special nor Absolute”**

“You forgetting someone...?”

A deep and low pitched voice went straight to our ears who were still gazing at each other in a happy mood.

Crap. We forgot.

Looking back at Kuon in an awkward mood, the rejected god who was shown the birth of a couple right in front of him, was staring at us with clouded eyes.

“In the end, both of you too, have mutual feelings? What’s up with humans. Go explode.”

I reflexively tried to protect Kobayashi-san on my back against the grudge-filled god, but the invincible maiden in love provocatively raised her chest and vividly mocked him.

“I haven’t done any evil deeds like you who had killed or harmed others including your loved ones just for your own desires, you see? After all, I properly did my best, like eating enough to not gain weight, as well as doing routine exercises, taking care of my skin and hair carefully, and make up... Well, I’m still working on that part, but it’s a given that I need to do my best by performing these small tasks hoping that my crush will at least think that I’m cute!

I kept doing my best every day, thinking about it even when we were having conversations, and after a year and a half of hardship, we finally managed to close our distance little by little and have mutual feelings!

You were only thinking about yourself, but I and Rize-tan are always trying to think about what other people would think as well!

That’s why, even if we get jealous and nothing works out, we still don’t forget to think about our partner!”

Kuon, who was slowly reprimanded by Kobayashi-san, regretfully stared at the ground.

His expression looks childish and his immaturity seems to appear as it is.

“Kuon, you’re just evil and atrocious with no sincerity, innocence, nor sweetness at all.

Hence, no matter how good your face or ability is, no one would like you because of how scary you are. Rather, It’s not good to cheat on someone in the first place.”

I added a follow-up to make Kuon angrier, but Kuon laughed and casted it all away.

“Lilena is my body half. It’s obvious for her to love me, so it’s natural for me that it’s not enough, right?”

Kobayashi-san looked down on him with cold eyes.

“Despicable. Hey Lilena, it’s fine to just dump Kuon here and find someone else to love.”

Kobayashi-san looked up at the sky and said so. Even when he heard that, Kuon’s leeway smile didn’t collapse.

“Hah! Lilena is a god, you know? There’s no one who can comfort her other than me who can be loved by her and equal with her.”

“Uwah, we got a boomer here. I’ll let you know that there is currently a new age of gods in that world. Lilena is not the only god.”

Kobayashi-san’s words finally broke Kuon’s composure.

“.....eh?”

The voice of his body half, Lilena was then heard by him who was tilting his head.

“No well, we fought with all our might at that time, didn’t we?

Both Kuon and I lost our power, and that power was scattered all over the world. It was then taken in by some people..... If not for that, why do you think humans can use magic now?”

They are the ones who made Majikoi, so Kuon must have seen the world over there and the possibilities in it. Hence, of course, Lilena thought that Kuon should have already known about the magic and the new age of gods that she just said. However, all of it went against the goddess’ expectation as he was blatantly perplexed.

“No...somehow..., I thought that they have interestingly evolved before I knew it...”

“Nonono, no matter how you look at it, only our power that can operate this world as we wish. When there’s a soul that could collect a lot of that power, it would become the same as us, God..., right? Although I was able to regain a lot of power, I’m still wondering if I could really win against them.”

Lilena proudly said so from somewhere. As a mother of that world, I think she felt proud of her own children.

Kobayashi-san grinned and opened her mouth to the pale and silent Kuon.

“Like I said, there are gods other than you. Lilena, is there any nice god among them?”

“N-no, well...

There is, a child who was pleased with my resurrection.

The child said, “The reason I became a god was that I wanted to comfort you by coming in contact with your suffering and sadness when you were an ancient witch.”, and my heart throbbed a little.

But still, as expected, for me, Kuon is-...”

“It’s time to stop, you cheater~”

Kobayashi-san abruptly stopped Lilena’s muttering.

“Rather, if I recall, aren’t there couple of humans who have been blessed by the gods like Arthur’s ancestry? To begin with, Kuon seems to also plan to love...? Well, adore Eeva anyway, I don’t think Lilena has any choices.”

I doubt that Kuon’s vicious and distorted feelings were even called love, but I also mentioned the possibility of love between God and humankind.

Kuon, who was stunned by my remarks, seems to have let loose of his soul.

“...Hey, shouldn’t you be able to capture him now?”

I secretly whispered to Lilena.

In an instant.

“...! I. CAUGHT. YOU!!!”

The happy voice of the clumsy goddess echoed. Almost at the same time, Kuon Kirise’s body went limp, and both of us rushed to support his body.

“...! .....puha!”

He let out a breath.

Kuon Kirise's soul instantly went inside his own body, but he managed to get up while staggering.

"...o-ohh...Kuon finally came out...?"

Farewell Kuon. Be scolded by your wife. Thank you for everything!"

Kirise-san said so while immediately shaking his hands high in the sky.

While sighing relief at the unexpectedly energetic appearance, I suddenly wondered.

"...Thank you?"

His body was used 6 times a week as he pleases, why would he be grateful for?

"Ah, that guy more or less helped my life. When I was in elementary school, I was a sickly and unlucky pretty boy with days are numbered, you see."

He's speaking for himself?

I reflexively wanted to retort, but I can't not think that he was indeed a pretty boy seeing that he has this kind of face now.

"Did Kuon cure you? But that's not a reason to do whatever he wants with someone else's body. Lilena, please discipline him properly."

"Yes! Of course!!"

Goddess Lilena responded to Kobayashi-san's words with energetic voice.

"I'm a klutz, so I'd like to ask everyone in this world and my proud children to help me. I'm neither special nor absolute anymore after all!"

The words she followed-up seems to be joyous and it made me feel that this is the happy ending.

The distorted relationship between Kuon and Lilena in a world where there were only both of them will surely become a better shape from now on.

For me, it would be best for them to break up. Whether they decide to part or reconcile, it's impossible for Kuon to do troublesome things like killing or destroying anymore, and Lilena also understood that there is someone else other than Kuon for her.

The current story is different from before.

"Good luck, Lilena.... Goodbye!"

I gently hugged Kobayashi-san who managed to squeeze out words and waved her small hand while holding back her tears.

I softly caressed her back as she began to pressed her face against my chest and sobbed convulsively.

"I see, our role is over.....Goodbye."

Our strange and marvelous game that started in the summer has finally closed its curtains.



## “Epilogue”

I still remember the day when Endou-sama and Kobayashi-sama bestowed us their last favor as if it was just yesterday. That happened in the middle of the Thanksgiving Festival which was held at the Royal Palace.

Liselotte, Finne, Baldur, Arthur, and everyone else were laughing and smiling at the fact that they were able to celebrate this joyous day together. Then, in the midst of this peaceful atmosphere, I suddenly heard Coebayashay-sama’s voice.

“Ah.... I can see them again....”

I unconsciously stopped moving the moment the goddess’ somewhat flabbergasted voice was heard for the first time in these past few days.

“You see, Lilena, who was the last boss has returned back being the goddess and the hidden boss, Kuon, has finally been sealed.... That means, our role as play-by-play and colour commentator are now over. I don’t know whether it’s because of that, or because Kuon has returned, or because this is the epilogue scene of the game, but we might not be able to see you for a while, and maybe-, no, most likely, this is the last time we’ll be able to deliver our voices through the game.”

As soon as I heard what Coebayashay-sama had said, I felt far more sadness at the prospect of parting with the two of them than the joy of successfully maintaining peace of this kingdom.

“But I’m glad that we could at least say our farewell. I’m glad that we’re able to see everyone happy. I’m glad that none of them died. I’m glad that Liselotte and everyone else were rewarded for their effort. I hope that everyone can still get along even if we’re gone.”

I gave a small nod to Endow-sama’s moving words. The people around looked at me strangely with a complicated expression as I suddenly stopped speaking in the middle of our conversation.

“Don’t forget this very precious and rare “the best of the best happy ending” even if everything’s going back to normal again, you hear me!? I’ll get angry if you make Rize-tan cry!”

Coebayashay-sama’s jokingly voice seems as if she was in tears. I’m not sure if it was because of seeing the tears on my cheeks that I could no longer hold back or perhaps she was also unwilling to separate from us.

However, I couldn’t take it anymore, so I decided to interrupt Gods’ words.

“We are, truly indebted, to you. The two of you who have saved this world, this kingdom, Liselotte, me, everything, I will worship you as my main gods for the rest of my life. Play-by-Play Commentator Endow-sama and Colour Commentator Coebayashay-sama. Let me pledge my unchanging loyalty to you both.”

I declared in a loud voice, got down on one knee, and lowered my head. All eyes were on me for my sudden eccentric behavior, but it didn’t matter.

“Even though... the first thing I said.., was that you.., don’t have to respond.., to our voices at all... geez....”

Coebayashay-sama said so in a troubled tone, and then fell silent.

“Sorry, but Kobayashi-san is currently in no condition to talk... Aah, geez, don’t cry like that....”

A while after Endow-sama replied, the only sounds I heard were the two of them discussing something in a low voice, and someone sobbing convulsively.

That was all I heard.

I felt like my surroundings had gotten noisy, but I still focused my attention on them.

“Ah, Sieg, I don’t mean to say this at the last minute, but....

Sieg, you’re pronouncing our names slightly wrong. If I have to say, Lilena is the one who almost correctly pronounced it....”

Blood drained from my face when Endow-sama awkwardly said so.

“I-I’m very sorry about that!!”

“It’s fine, you don’t have to apologize. Though, you see, we’re not gods anymore, right? And it’s a bit awkward to add ‘-sama’ to our names as well... Rather, Shihono-...Kobayashi-san also said something similar, so we thought that it would be nice if you can remember and call us properly as “Play-by-Play Commentator Endou-kun and Colour Commentator Kobayashi-san” by the end of the day, you see....”

While pardoning my preposterously rude remark, the generous Endow-sama suggested a bewildering proposal.

“However....”

It was hard for me to accept it, no matter if it was the gods themselves who suggested it. When I looked around for help, I saw my father shaking his head as hard as he could with a pale face at a distance, and Finne nodding easily nearby.

Even those who could hear the gods’ voice were divided in their opinions.

I’m sure my father would be saying, “Discourteous! Do your best to constraint yourself!” and Finne would say, “It doesn’t matter, does it?”.

“We thought it would be safer if we act like gods until we finished our role, but it’s finally over! In the first place, we’re of the same generation! In fact, Sieg is actually a year older than us!.... most importantly, we already considered Sieg as a friend since a long time ago. So, it would be nice if you can stop with the ‘-sama’ and being so polite to us, or something like that....”

If you say it that much....

“I underst-...., Alright...”

I gave a stiff reply and was greeted by Endow-sama’s happy voice.

“Yes, like that. Alright, let’s move on to the pronunciation!”



After a couple of trials and errors, I succeeded in learning the correct pronunciation of both of their names.

“Yup, all good! Well, we don’t have anything more to say, so I guess this is really goodbye.”

“Really, thank you so much, Endou-kun, Kobayashi-san....goodbye.”

I wiped away my tears with the back of my hand, and called my friends’ name that I had just learned along with parting words with a smile on my face.

“G-Goo-GOODBYEEEE...!!”

Kobayashi-sama’s nasal voice echoed in between her loud shouting. I couldn’t help but burst out laughing, and Endou-sama also laughed at the same time. Our hearts were certainly connected both over here and there. Soon after, the sound of Kobayashi-sama’s sobbing echoed several times, and the two voices that I had been listening to since the spring have completely disappeared.

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Five months have passed since then. Today is the day of my and Liselotte’s wedding. After their voices disappeared, there were a few times when I was perplexed by how difficult it was for me to understand Liselotte’s “tsun”. But in that time, I always wondered what the two commentators would say. I also let Liselotte pause for a moment and slowly found out how she really felt. Thus, the days we spent without the gods’ voice seemed to deepen our love for each other. “Liselotte, I’m coming in?”

With slight nervousness, I stepped into the waiting room where Liselotte had finally finished dressing up. What greeted me was a large number of people who had helped the bride to get ready. However, I was petrified and forgot to breathe as soon as I saw the radiant and beautiful Liselotte who’s currently in the center of them, looking embarrassed after receiving everyone’s words of praises. “.....a Goddess?” “Yes, it’s me!”

I let my thoughts on Liselotte’s appearance slip in public, but it seems that an unrelated outsider (Lilena) happens to be present as well.

“Not you. It was meant for Liese who is looking beautiful like a goddess..., no, Liese is even much more beautiful than the likes of Lilena.... Not good. I don’t know who else to compare her beauty to.....!”

After I shouted my vexed feeling, Liese quickly averted her gaze. However, I didn't miss the slightest hint of a smile on her face.

"Your Highness, no matter how you put it, you're being rude towards Lilena-sama. Well of course, I'd be glad if you say that I'm the most beautiful woman here today, but I don't think it's appropriate to speak ill of her as such."

Her voice sounded angry and her gaze was averted from me. If it was the normal occurrence, she would quickly say so, but the unnatural movement of her mouth was certainly showing her pleasure.

"Liselotte-sama is so kind...! On the contrary, Sieg-san! I've been thinking about this for a while, but you don't respect me at all, do you!?"

"My main gods are Endou-kun and Kobayashi-san. I do not worship anyone except my two friends."

After clearly declaring so, Lilena, who was drawing closer to me, stomped her feet to the ground.

"Even though, I'm the creator god.....! Even though if I'm not here, Liselotte-sama and Siegward-san won't even exist in the first place!"

"It's pathetic that the only thing you can boast is your past achievements. By chance, isn't that what we called as a grandma?"

Lilena collapsed and fell on her knees from my remarks and scornful laugh.

"He even dissed me with a slang word that are not fitted for a prince...! D-Damn it...!"

I have been thinking that it would be more appropriate for her to have a sculpture of her that's at least not a standing one in the temple.

As I watched her on all fours while banging on the floor in frustration, she suddenly let out an ominous laugh.

".....Fufufu, but for today, even Siegward-san will unexpectedly be grateful to me! Perhaps, you might even worship me from now on!"

Standing up slowly while saying a few words in a haughty tone, Lilena deployed some sort of magic.

"Well then, look and be amazed! This is Lilena, Goddess of Creation's grand magic of a lifetime!!"

She chanted as if she was singing, she spun around as if she was dancing.

The light that was surrounding her flew up into the sky and converged into two sparkling images.

Eventually, a pair of translucent man and woman appeared. They were about the same age as me, or maybe a year younger.

A healthy-looking man and a lovely woman. Holding hands tightly, they looked both surprised and happy. I probably had the same expression on my face.

"Long time no see! No, is it supposed to be "nice to meet you"? In your case, it should be that one, right?"

She nodded her head and said so with the voice of, yes, there's no mistake, it's Kobayashi-sama!

“Eh? Are we still in the family waiting room? Is it even okay for us to be here?”

Endou-sama said so uneasily, but there was no problem.

“It’s been a while, Kobayashi-sama and Endou-sama. Lilena is also here to give her blessing to Liselotte, so there is no problem. Rather, thank you for coming.”

When I greeted them like so, they both looked annoyed for some reason.

“I don’t need the ‘-sama’!”

“Spare us from the honorifics too....”

Rather than being ashamed, I couldn’t help but laughed at their perfectly-synced words. Lilena, who had just crawled on all fours in frustration at the lack of respect not too long ago, has a different caliber now.

“Sorry. My mistake. But to me, both of you are my most precious gods.

You have watched over us, cared for us, given us your wisdoms, properly guided us, and you also have allowed us all to celebrate this good day together. It’s impossible for me to not love and respect my wonderful and amazing friends.”

When I said so, Endou-sama scratched his cheek in embarrassment.

“Somehow, it’s kinda embarrassing.... We’re just a bunch of high school students with a little luck, you know...”

“We don’t know what to wear to a prince’s wedding, so we settled with only our school uniform....”

Kobayashi-san’s followed-up words made me feel frustrated. If I had known, I would have prepared their attires beforehand.

No, to begin with, I don’t think it would have been possible to get them to wear it. They’re translucent.

Suddenly, I noticed that Liselotte, who is undoubtedly the most beautiful woman in this world, was looking dumbfounded.

I see, this is the first time she’s even heard the two of them. I should introduce them to her.

“.....that, voice...”

But as she said this, tears trickled down her cheeks. With a startled expression, Kobayashi-san shouted.

“Uweeh!? Why is Rize-tan crying!? You’re too quick! It’s not time yet, you know! Save the tears for the letter to the parents, okay!?”

“Is there even one in this wedding too? That kind of event?”

There isn’t.

I gently wiped away Liselotte’s tears with my handkerchief as I responded to Endou-kun’s words in my mind.

“Liese, these two are the gods of the other world, Play-by-Play Commentator Endou-kun and Colour Commentator Kobayashi-san.

They protected you from the ancient witch. They had also guided me when I didn't even understand that you were the cutest thing in the world. They are our benefactors and my dearest friends."

When Liselotte heard my introductions, she slowly bowed her head with deep emotion.

"Thank you, very much."

When she looked up slowly, there were no more tears on her eyes nor on her cheeks.

"Nonono! We're just fans of Rizetan!"

"That's right. We're just commentators who was trying our best to help Liselotte."

Liselotte tilted her head from Kobayashi-san and Endou-kun's words.

"...fans?"

"We're just fans who screamed, "Geez! I can't get over how cute Rizetan and her tsundere is!" or

"Look at how cuuute she is! You need to properly look at her, Sieg!"

"Really, trying to take over such a good girl is beyond worst, isn't it, ancient witch?"

Kobayashi-san said to Liselotte, while Endou-kun said to Lilena.

The moment Lilena swiftly and smoothly got down on her knees, Liselotte shrieked.

"Such thing... I'm not that pretty...rather, Sieg nonchalantly said that I'm the most...

Aaah, geez! Could you please not tease me like that!?"

The three of us, the ones who cherish Liselotte, looked at each other and laughed at the same time.

She is, after all, the most adorable thing ever.

Thus, the wedding ceremony, which was attended and blessed by the three gods, was proudly added to the end of the many miracles and feats brought by "Play-by-Play Commentator Endou-kun and Colour Commentator Kobayashi-san" in our kingdom's history books.

